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THE ORCHARD BOOKS

VIII: *An Epistle of Jesus Christ to the Faithful Soul*

AN EPISTLE OF JESUS CHRIST

TO THE SOUL THAT IS DEVOUTLY AFFECTED TOWARDS HIM

wherein
are contained certain divine inspirations
teaching a man to know himself and
instructing him in the perfection of true piety

by

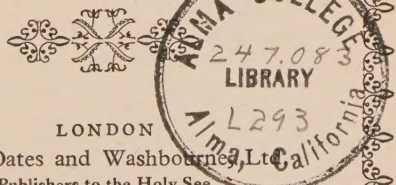
JOANNES LANSPERGIUS
a Charterhouse monk

and translated into English by

PHILIP
19*th* *Earl of Arundel*

Edited by

A MONK OF PARKMINSTER



LONDON
Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd.
Publishers to the Holy See
1926

44873

IMPRIMI POTEST:
FR. JACOBUS MARIA,
Prior Cartusiae.

IN DOMO LUCAE,
Die 25ª Octobris, 1925.

NIHIL OBSTAT:
PETRUS E. RYAN, S.T.D.

IMPRIMATUR:
✠ PETRUS EPŪS SOUTHWARC.

SOUTHWARCI,
Die 22ª Decembris, 1925.

Made and Printed in Great Britain

INTRODUCTION

JOHN GERECHT of Landsberg, the author of this book, is better known to us as Lanspergius — "the devout Lanspergius "—from the form of his name, latinized according to the taste of his time, as *Joannes Justus Lanspergius*. He was born at Landsberg in Bavaria in the year 1489. Beyond that date nothing is known to us of his early years; as to his parentage or childhood the chroniclers are silent. We first meet him as a student at Cologne, where, at the conclusion of his university course, he entered the Charterhouse in the year 1509, his twentieth year.

When the doors of S Barbara's Charterhouse closed upon him, silence once more settled down upon his doings. We know that the ten years that followed upon his religious profession in 1510 were full years, years to which Lanspergius was to look back afterwards with wistful regret, when the cares and distractions of office amongst his brethren made him long once more for the complete solitude and silence of his cell. This does not mean to say that Lanspergius

led a life of leisure during that time; it was God's seed-time and he knew it, so those years were full of work. There was prayer and choir duty, of course, but there was also that further constituent of monastic life, work: "not recreation or occupation, but Work, serious, laborious work, the obedience to the law of labour under which all men lie," as an authority on the monastic life has recently written.* Lanspergius, moreover, seems to have set himself the quite unusual and purely voluntary task of washing his own and his brethren's clothes, "thrice or oftener in the week, and not a few garments at a time," he tells us.† This was exceptional and in addition to the ordinary work set Carthusians in those days, the transcription of books.

The Carthusian Order, and the particular monastery of that order which had now become Lanspergius's home for life, held a long-standing tradition in this matter, which, if not precisely literary, was at least "bookish." S Bruno, its founder, himself one of the more considerable scholars of his time, had bequeathed a love of books among other legacies to his sons. Wibert of Nogent, visiting the Grande Chartreuse early in the

* Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, p. 373.

† D. Joannis Justi Lanspergii, Opera Omnia (Monsterolii, MDCCCXC), t. iv, p. 115b.

twelfth century, was struck by the contrast between the poverty of the cells, clothing and food of the monks there, and the richness of their library: "The less they feel the need of material bread," he writes, "the more ardently do they labour to gain that nourishment that passes not away but remains for ever."* That this was not mere acquisitiveness is shown by regulations contained in the earliest code of Carthusian statutes, the *Consuetudines Guigonis*, the Customs of Wigo (*c.* A.D. 1126), which show love and care of the community's library: "The occupant of the cell . . . receives two books from the library to read, which he is enjoined to keep with all diligence and care lest they be soiled by smoke, dust or any other defilement. For, as to books, they being the never-failing food of our souls, we will that they be kept with all care."† As time went on, the library grew, as tome after tome was produced by the patient toil of monastic copyists. This craft, as has been said, was the Carthusian contribution to the world's work. Not for them was heavy field labour, which would take them far from their solitary cells; nor were they to teach in the theological or other schools of the time. The copyist's art was an occupation which admirably fulfilled the

* Migne, P. L., t. clvi, col. 854.
† *Ibid.*, t. cliii, col. 693.

conditions required for a solitary's work; it was quiet and it was laborious at the same time. Collectors in modern times are apt to grow enthusiastic over the regular penmanship and artistic colour work of the old scribes; few think of the immense sum of labour involved in the production by hand of, say, a Bible or any of the more lengthy works of the Fathers. The brief note sometimes found at the end of one of them, speaks volumes to those who know the laborious character of the task: "And so this book is finished by a certain brother of the Charterhouse outside the walls of Treves, on the day after the Annunciation of our blessed Lady, in the year one thousand fourteen hundred and fifty-seven. Pray for the transcriber"; such forms as this we meet again and again.

In Wigo's "Customs" again, minute directions are given to assure that the solitary should be well equipped for his daily task: "He shall have for writing, a writing-desk, quills, chalk, two pumice stones, two ink horns, a scalpel, two knives or razors for smoothing the parchment, an awl, a punch, a lead, a ruler, a wooden writing-gauge, a drawing board and a style; . . . for nearly all those whom we receive, if it can be done, we teach to write."* Nor do the "Customs" forget to add as a last quality

* Migne, P. L., t. cliii, col. 693.

to their work, that it shall be useful for the monks' neighbours: "We will that this [transcription] be done as carefully as possible, so that we, who may not preach the word of God by speech, may do so by our hands."*

Such was the tradition to which Lanspergius succeeded on joining the Carthusians at Cologne, but it was already a dying tradition. The invention of the printing-press had dealt the monastic *scriptorium* a blow from which it could not recover. But if quills were no longer to scratch busily over parchment, the monks would move with the times, so that we find Carthusians early in the field with printed books, the product of their own presses. Actually the earliest book issued from a Carthusian press was the *Historia flendae Crucis*, printed at Parma *per Fratres Cartusiae* in 1477. Presses multiplied as time went on; we even read of a Carthusian prior who, in his eagerness to have one of his own, melted down bronze candlesticks from his church and himself cast a fount of type.† There was already a small press at S Barbara's when Lanspergius began his religious life there, and book-making and printing were, so to say, "in the air." The easier

* Migne, P. L., t. cliii, col. 693.

† G. C. Williamson, *Behind my Library Door*, p. 63. London: Selwyn and Blount, 1921.

multiplication of books led naturally to a greater production, not only of copies, but of original works, and though Lanspergius tells us that he had no intention of publishing anything, he began as a young monk to collect materials for what was afterwards his first published work. His own account is too interesting to be omitted, as it gives us a precious and all too rare glimpse of him at work. He writes: "When I had left the world, dear reader, and entered the Carthusian Order, in the second year of my religious life, whilst still quite a youth, I put together divers teachings, especially of vices and virtues, for the rooting out of the one and acquiring of the other, if it so happened that I heard or read something of the kind which seemed worthy of note. Then, after a length of time, what I had heaped together without order, I gathered together under fixed headings, so that they might be handier and readier if I should wish to find them. And this is of the first importance to those beginners who would happily war against vice and evil temptations, so that they have opportune counsel and remedies at hand. . . . Nothing was further from my thoughts than that I should publish anything, for I did not believe myself capable of so doing, or that anything I might write should be thought worthy of being brought out into the sight

of all." He goes on to tell us that, pressed by friends, he at last consented, and putting his notes into order once again, he gave them the form in which they are found as *Enchiridion Militiae Christianae*—A Handbook of Christian Warfare.*

Ten formative years thus passed by swiftly as they only can in the Charterhouse; ten years of deepening spiritual life and of growing knowledge; a time of deep peace, which was now rudely to be broken in upon. Lanspergius was put into office in his monastery. What the office was is uncertain; but it included the mastership of novices, so that he may have been nominated Vicar, to which office this charge was then often attached. But whatever it was, it meant an end for him of the deep silence and peace of former years; he was given office " in which he had often to speak "† are his own words. It was during this time that he wrote perhaps the larger part of those " Letters to Novices," which in themselves form an almost complete directory both for novices and their masters.‡ Ten years passed by, well filled with the labours of his office, a length of time that enabled him to leave a permanent mark on the community of S Barbara's; to judge by one or two of his disciples, the two

* Opera Omnia, t. iv, p. 508.
† *Ibid.*, *idem*, p. 115b. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 83 *seqq.*

Lohers, for instance, Dom Hugh and Dom Bruno, who were afterwards to do so much for the continuation of his work, Lanspergius trained them to a close imitation of himself, to a deep and tender piety, accompanied by indefatigable literary work. When we consider how full was his day as a Carthusian, in which he would have to spend some seven and a half hours or more in the celebration of the divine office alone, besides his other duties, we wonder greatly how he has been able to leave such a mass of writing, filling as it does in the modern edition of his works no less than five volumes in quarto of six to seven hundred pages apiece. And, in addition to this, Lanspergius's never robust health began to fail under a complication of maladies. Perhaps the great secret of his energy lies in that interior agony which was his daily lot, and which grew greater as the years went by: the thought of the destruction of souls that was going on all round him through the work of the Reformation. If a S Teresa in her far-off Spanish cloister, to which only a distant echo of the crash of Christendom could reach, was driven to her wonderful life of activity by the same cause, what must it have been for a soul like that of Lanspergius to dwell at the very scene of conflict, and to know at first hand the ravages of heresy and schism? Thus the love of God drove him

incessantly to the forms of apostolate which alone were open to him as a Carthusian—prayer, penance and the writing of books—either to fortify languishing piety, or in direct answer to the heretics.

To a man thus determined, no sacrifice seems too great, and Lanspergius was now called upon to make what is perhaps the greatest sacrifice that can be asked of a monk. He had already given up the full peace of his cell for the good of his community and his younger brethren upon his appointment as Master of Novices; he was now called upon to leave the house of his profession. In 1530 he was chosen Prior of the Charterhouse of Vogelsang near Jülich, half-way between Cologne and Aachen. Here, in addition to the ordinary cares of a superior, the new prior had to undertake two offices of quite un-Carthusian character, that of court preacher to the Duke of Jülich, and of confessor to his duchess. The duke's family were founders of the monastery and therefore privileged; also, in the Germany of that moment of Lutheran revolt there was a certain difficulty in assuring that your preacher was a man of undoubted orthodoxy. So Lanspergius was constrained to accept the double office. As a superior his subjects found in him that twofold gift which goes to make the perfect ruler of a community: zeal

for observance accompanied by affability and real affection for those whom he rules. "Who was there," writes Dom Bruno Loher, "who went to him and did not feel himself helped by his exhortations? Who carried not away some treasure from his familiar talks?"* He praises his kindness, which never degenerated into softness: and remarks on his patience under suffering, by which he hid from those about him the grave state of his health.

In spite of the many calls upon his time that his new office entailed, there was no diminution in his literary output. Sunday after Sunday and on Feast days as well, Lanspergius preached before the diminutive court at Jülich those sermons which fill the first two volumes of his works, of 733 and 642 pages respectively. Nor are they "court sermons" in the accepted style of that *milieu*. His *Meditations on the Passion* belong to this period, and, most of all in regard of our present purpose, it was now that he wrote this book, AN EPISTLE OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE SOUL THAT IS DEVOUTLY AFFECTED TOWARDS HIM. Written first of all for an Abbey of Premonstratensian Nuns, it has become, by translation, probably the best known of Lanspergius's works, as we shall see later on. During his term as prior at

* Opera Omnia, t. i, p. xiii.

Vogelsang also, Lanspergius had the consolation of visiting once at least that Mecca of Carthusians, the Grande Chartreuse, when he attended the General Chapter of his order and by appointment preached the chapter sermon.*

But the Charterhouse of the Sorrows of our Lady at Jülich was unhealthily situated; Lanspergius's already failing health grew rapidly worse there; so, after only four years of office as prior, he was granted *misericordiam* —a Carthusian phrase for release from office —and went back to his beloved cloister at Cologne in 1534. He returned to find his old superior, Dom Peter Bloemenvenna, still at his post after thirty years of priorship, but he died two years later, and the community chose as his successor Dom Gerard Kalkbrenner. At the same time, the Vicar of the house, Dom Theodoric Loher, was elected prior at Hildesheim, leaving that office vacant. The new prior of S Barbara's felt he could not do better than appoint Lanspergius to the vacant post; if he were feeble physically, his sanctity would supply for all deficiencies on any score. And besides, the greater part of the community must have been made up of those who had been his novices, which would give him an added title to their veneration and affection.

* Opera Omnia, t. iii, p. 597 *seqq.*

The end was not far off, however. Three years later, worn out with austerities, crippled with sickness, and torn interiorly by what must have almost seemed to his contemporaries as the abandonment of the Church to the gates of hell triumphant against her, Lanspergius died on August 11, 1539, at the early age of fifty. From the General Chapter of the following year he received the highest earthly praise a Carthusian can hope for, short of the supreme honours of the Church to which he may not look forward, in the simple addition to his obit of the phrase: *Qui* 30 *annos vixit in ordine laudabiliter*—"He lived in the order for thirty years in a praiseworthy manner." Such is the terse way they have in the Charterhouse of summing up a life dear to God and men, which elsewhere might lead to the honours of beatification.

Lanspergius was already known as a writer from his edition of the works of S Gertrude, which he was the first to translate into Latin from their original German; he had given a great forward impetus to devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord;* but it was not until almost a century after his death that his own works were collected together and

* See Bainvel, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, p. 172. London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1924.

published by Dom George Garnfelt in five volumes at Cologne in 1630. With some corrections, this edition was reprinted in 1693, again at Cologne. It was this latter text from which the modern edition was made by the Carthusians and printed at their press at Montreuil-sur-mer in 1888.* In these editions—and the fact should be noted—the EPISTLE practically loses its own identity, appearing merely as Part III of the First Book of Colloquies,† with Lanspergius's chapters turned into "canons," and with their headings changed to bring them into agreement with the rest of the work. Several other partial editions of Lanspergius's works including the EPISTLE had appeared before the Garnfelt one of 1630 was published. As forming part of the handbook *Pharetra Divini Amoris* the EPISTLE had appeared at Cologne during his lifetime; there were editions of the same at Antwerp (1547), again at Cologne (1620), and in 1572 the first edition of the EPISTLE separately appeared at Louvain.

Translations soon began to make their appearance, the first of which seems to have been the Spanish one of the Carthusian

* D. Joannis Justi Lanspergii Cartusiani, Opera Omnia in quinque tomos distributa, etc. (Monstero-lii, Typis Cartusiae S. M. de Pratis, 1888).

† *Op. cit.*, t. iv, pp. 331 *seqq.*

Dom Andrew Capilla, monk of Scala Dei and later Bishop of Urgel in Catalonia (✠ 1610). It was added as an appendix to his first book of *Considerations on the Gospels of all the Sundays of the Year*, etc., which first appeared at Lerida in 1572, and ran through numerous editions.* A woman, the famous Elena Lucrecia Cornaro-Piscopia, was responsible for translating the EPISTLE into Italian, but curiously enough, although so versatile a linguist, she chose to make her translation from Capilla's Spanish version rather than from the original Latin. This was published by the learned Benedictine Dom Benedict Bacchini at Parma in 1686 amongst her other works. The French translation had appeared before this, in 1657, anonymously, under the initials F. F. D. R., which version reached its seventh edition in 1680.†

But what interests us more directly is the English version which is here printed for the sixth time and comes to us with a double claim upon our veneration, for if the original Latin comes from a Carthusian cell, the English translation comes from a cell too, a cell in the Tower of London, and from the pen of a martyr, Philip Howard, 19th Earl

* Saragossa, 1573 and 1578; Lerida (again), 1575; Alcala, 1578 and 1609; Madrid, 1592.

† Discours en forme de Lettre de N. S. JESUS-CHRIST, etc., à Paris, chez G. Desprez.

of Arundel. He was the eldest son of Thomas, 4th Duke of Norfolk by his first wife, Lady Mary Fitzalan, and was born on June 28, 1557, during the brief re-establishment of Catholicism under Mary. He thus received baptism from Catholic hands, Philip II himself standing godfather to him, since his father, the Duke's, religion was consistently that of the party in power at the moment. As a boy he had for his first tutor the celebrated Gregory Martin—one of the founders of the English College at Douay, and a translator of the Douay Bible—but he crossed to Flanders soon after Elizabeth's succession and was succeeded as tutor by Protestants such as Foxe, the martyrologist, so that Philip's small store of Catholic teaching soon disappeared. He was just fifteen years old at the time of his father's execution for treason, on June 2, 1572, and the guardians who were then appointed for his minority sent him to Cambridge to study. There he seems to have made greater progress in dissipation than in learning; but it seems somewhat ungenerous in a recent writer* to say that this was due to weakness of character, and to add, "from Cambridge he brought back little that was useful unless the degree of M.A. given 'without the usual exercises'

* G. S. Davies, *Charterhouse in London*, p. 144. London: Murray, 1924.

can be so counted," seeing that this was the ordinary privilege of the nobility at both Universities, a privilege in force, and acted upon until early in last century. It seems no exaggeration, from what we are to learn afterwards of him, to say that the Earl of Surrey, as Philip was now known by courtesy, was no worse educated than the main body of his contemporaries of like rank, and probably quite as well, in classical literature at least, as many graduates of to-day.

Leaving Cambridge in 1575 at the age of eighteen the Earl went to court. Elizabeth's court, whatever else it may have been, cannot be considered as a school for saints, and Philip's earliest biographer says that there "he was drawn into many great inconveniences."* In 1578, after entertaining the Queen in the country and at his palace in Norwich in regal style, he gained even greater favour in her eyes, so that in 1580 he was "restored in blood." This enabled him the following year to succeed his uncle, the Earl of Arundel, in that title and his estates, though the title of Duke of Norfolk was not restored to him. These were years of unrivalled brilliance, and the Earl outshone his peers in love of magnificence and in gaiety,

* *The Lives of Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, and of Anne Dacres*, etc., p. 12. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1857.

falling into debt in the process despite his immense wealth. That he was a favourite of Elizabeth is a sufficient indication of his manner of life. He had been married as a child to Anna Dacres, a ward of his father and an heiress, but up till now had studiously neglected her. He had even gone so far as to say that he doubted whether she were his wife or no. They now came together, and his wife's strong character and religious feeling seem to have had an immediate effect upon the husband, whose religion had been entirely dormant during this period. This same year (1581) the Earl was present at a disputation, in the Tower, between the Blessed Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin, and other imprisoned priests, with some of the cleverer ministers of the new Establishment. " By that he saw and heard there, he easily perceived on which side the Truth and true Religion was."* He was not at once converted but was very much shaken, and his wife's reconciliation to the Church in the following year still further inclined him towards the religion of his forebears. The Queen came to know of the wife's change of religion and feared for its effect on her husband, who now began to be less eager in his attendance at court. That this should be so, and that the change should have been begun

* *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

at the instance of his wife, now a reconciled "papist," was more than Elizabeth could tolerate. The first of a series of imprisonments was her Tudor way of showing her resentment, and the Earl was imprisoned in his own house. In 1584, after much thought and a long struggle to live a life in accordance with his beliefs, he was himself reconciled to the Church by Father Weston, who had been the means of his wife's conversion. Tradition would have it that this happy event for his soul, which was at the same time the beginning of his worldly undoing, took place at Howard House, as the dismantled London Charterhouse was then called. This is conjectural at best; Father Weston in his recollections simply says that the reception took place *selecto loco*—"in an appointed place."* The change wrought in the Earl's manner of life was at once patent to all at court, where his studied absence from attendance on the Queen when it would have involved attendance at church supplied the motive of the change. His position at once became one of such extreme difficulty and danger that he decided to seek safety in flight to the Continent, where he might be free to practise his newly recovered religion. In April, 1585, after preparations which had been betrayed to the Government, he sailed

* Catholic Record Society, *Transactions*, xxi, p. 96.

secretly from Littlehampton, but was overtaken at sea and arrested. Brought before the Star Chamber under a trumped-up charge of communicating with the Queen of Scots, and condemned without trial, he was fined the immense sum of £10,000, and was committed to the Tower, which he was never again to leave as a free man.

Three years later, while still a prisoner in the Tower, he was accused of having certain Masses celebrated and prayers said for the success of the Spanish Armada as it sailed up the Channel. This was construed as treason, though the Earl explained that the prayers and Masses were meant for his own and other Catholics' safety: it having been rumoured that a general massacre of "papists" would take place should the Spaniards land on English soil. He was tried on this charge and found guilty, sentence of death being pronounced upon him on April 4, 1589. He was not, however, led out to Tower Hill to die as his father had been, but left to languish in prison with the threat of a traitor's death continually held over his head; a cat-and-mouse policy that recommended itself to Elizabeth, but which seems hard to explain. Petty spite and continual annoyance were Philip's lot in captivity, and when his only son was born in 1586, he was allowed to see neither mother

nor child. Even when he lay dying in 1595 the permission to say farewell to his wife and children, which was reluctantly granted, had a condition attached to it which he could not in conscience accept, and did not—he was to go to church. In a sense, it was well that this last affliction should have been added to others of his death-bed, since it marks clearly enough the real cause of his imprisonment and death sentence—his religion. He died on Sunday, October 19, 1595, at the early age of thirty-seven, having been wellnigh eleven years a prisoner in the Tower. Surely, without wishing to anticipate the Church's decision, we may give him the name and honour of martyr, in the same way that we do to S John the Evangelist upon his exile's death at Patmos.

Visitors to the Tower of London are familiar with the inscriptions and crucifix carved by the Earl of Arundel on the walls of his prison in the Beauchamp Tower, mute witnesses of the tedium of his days there. But he found a better way to wile away the long hours of his more or less solitary day in translating some of the spiritual works which he read, and in the making of pious verse. In these exercises he was undoubtedly influenced, and perhaps helped, by one afterwards a fellow-prisoner and martyr, the Ven. Robert Southwell, S.J., who, in 1586,

had taken Father Weston's place as confessor and spiritual adviser in the Countess of Arundel's household. The following are the scanty results of his work in prison that we know to be certainly his and that have come down to us:

1. *The Fourfold Meditation of the Four Last Things.* This was printed surreptitiously in 1606. The authorship was for some time doubtful, but evidence of trustworthy manuscripts makes it now certain that it is the Earl's. No printed copy is known to exist. There is a fragment in the British Museum.

2. *Verses on Christ Crucified.* Written before 1590, consisting of fourteen four-line stanzas.*

3. "He writ also three treatises of the Excellency and Utility of Vertue, which never came to light by reason he was forced to send them away upon fear of a search before they were fully perfected and polished."†

4. *The Epistle of Jesus Christ to the Faithful Soul.* Of this, his longest and best-known work, the present edition is the sixth. One contemporary manuscript is known to exist which is, or was, at Crowcombe Court, Somerset. Its exact relationship to the printed editions must be a matter of specula-

* Text printed in C.R.S., vii, p. 29.

† *Lives of Philip Howard*, etc., p. 106.

tion, as its present whereabouts cannot be ascertained.

Printed editions:—

1. First edition, some time previous to 1595. It must have been secretly printed in England, as that course, though dangerous, was less so than attempting to smuggle in a large consignment of Catholic books from abroad. But where? It is just barely possible that it was printed at Howard House (The Charterhouse) where the Puritans accused the Countess of Arundel of having a Catholic press at work.* No example is known to exist, thanks to the rigorous suppression, by Government, of the book. The second edition says that it was "in such sort suppressed, as very few or almost none of the whole press came to their designed view."

2. Second edition, Antwerp, 1595. Only one perfect copy is known, that at Lambeth Palace. The title reads:

An Epistle in the Person of Christ to the faithfull soule. Written first by that learned Lanspergius, and after translated into English by one of no small fame, whose good example of sufferance and living hath and wilbe a memorall unto his

* C. R. S., vol. xxi, p. 319.

countrie and posteritie for ever. Imprinted at Antwerpe, 1595.

It is highly probable that the place of printing is a blind, and that the book was really produced in England. The text is page for page that of the next edition to be mentioned, but in this edition the text is preceded and followed by sets of verse over the authorship of which there has been some discussion.* These are:

(*a*) *A Caveat to the Reader.* Two stanzas of seven lines, and

(*b*) *A Dialogue betwixt a Christian and Christ hanging on the cross, written in Latin by Marcus Marulas, and translated into English.*

These two sets precede the text of the EPISTLE, and no very clear indication can be given as to the authorship of their translations from internal evidence. But the case is quite otherwise, we believe, with the three sets which follow the text (pp. 283-308), which are as follows:

(*c*) *Four verses for helping a man's memorie.* Begins: "*Have special care to rule thy tong.*"

* C. R. S., vol. xxi, p. 329; *Month*, vol. lxxxvi (January, 1896), p. 43; *The Tablet*, 1910, i, 19, 98, 256.

(*d*) *A Hymne of the life and Passion of our Saviour Christ, made after the manner of an Alphabet, everie verse beginning with everie Letter, as they follow one another in order in the Christ crosse rowe.* Begins: "*Almighty God whose love to use.*"

Father Thurston found in this arrangement a proof of the Earl's authorship of the verses, for he writes: "In the Earl's writings we may trace a certain tendency towards orderly arrangement, and the making of lists and catalogues."*

(*e*) *A Hymne wherein the praises of all Creatures are offered up unto the Creator.* Begins: "*O Christ the glorious crowne of Virgins that are pure.*" Eighteen eight-line stanzas.

Of itself, of course, the presence of these verses appended to a published work is no proof that they are from the hand of the author of that work. Yet, it is argued, if the author were known also as a versifier, the presumption would be that they also were by the chief writer. The late Mr. Gillow, with his great authority in such matters, and Father Bliss, S.J., and the late Miss Guiney with theirs, believed that they had found reasons for assigning them to more than one hand. We believe that the whole matter be-

* *Month*, loc. cit.

comes clear when we know that (*c*), (*d*), and (*e*) are not original compositions, but *translations* from Lanspergius. This point has been missed by the writers above named from their having consulted the *modern* edition of Lanspergius's works, in which, as we said above,* the EPISTLE was shorn of its attendant matter by the original editors of 1630. Reference to earlier versions—*e.g.*, that of 1547—shows these verses in place, just where we find them in the English translation of 1595; (*c*) occurs at page 300, following on the "Instructions," as *Versus memoriam juvans quo hujus regulae potiora comprehensa significantur.* After the verses follows a brief commentary which is word for word that of the translation: *Lingua significatur refrenatio linguae*, etc.

(*d*) follows on the next page as *Hymnus alphabeticus de vita et Passione Jesu*, etc. The English translator has had to rearrange the matter somewhat, owing to the exigences of following the "Christ crosse rowe" in a different language, but the subject-matter is the same as in the Latin.

(*e*) comes next in order, just as in the translation, as *Hymnus similis, laudes referens creatori*, etc., and begins: *Jesu corona virginum*, etc.†

* *Supra*, p. xvii.

† The hymns (*d*) and (*e*) are to be found in the modern edition of Lanspergius's works in t. v, pp. 395 and 414 respectively.

Now what is more likely than that the Earl, with such a Latin copy before him, and it may be this very edition of 1547, which would be the most likely one to have found its way to England from Antwerp, simply translated straight ahead what he found there down to the end of the *Prayer for one that is ready to communicate*, and the *Prayer of S Ambrose*[?] with which that edition concludes? We believe that it is much easier to suppose this, than to introduce other translators, and think it to be established almost certainly that these verses are translations made by the Earl of Arundel.

3. Third edition, 1610, no place of printing. The title reads: *An Epistle or Exhortation of Jesus Christ to the soule, that is devoutly affected towards him. Wherein are contained certaine divine inspirations, teaching a man to know himself, and instructing him in the perfection of true piety. Written in latin by the devout servant of Christ, Joannes Lanspergius, a Charterhouse Monke. And translated into English by the Lord Philip, late Earle of Arundell. Permissu Superiorum M.DC.X.* This edition is dedicated to the English Poor Clares of Gravelines in a dedicatory letter signed *I. W., Priest*, who is identified as

John Wilson, the martyrologist.* As he superintended a press at the English College at S Omer's there seems no reason to doubt that it was printed there. For the first time the Earl's name appears on the title as translator, there being no further reason for concealment after his death. In this edition the verses mentioned above are omitted, but the "Instructions," the "Very Short Exercise of love unto God," the "Praier for him that is ready to celebrate or communicate," and the "Praier of the Blessed Bishop S Ambrose," are all included. Four copies of this edition are known to exist; one is in the British Museum, one in the possession of Lord Petre, another belongs to the Library of the Jesuit Fathers at 114, Mount Street, London; the fourth belongs to the Library of the Dominican Priory at Woodchester, and has been used in the preparation of this edition.

4 and 5 are reprints from the 1610 edition, published by John Philp at London in 1867 and again in 1871. They follow the 1610 edition closely, but insert at p. 269 the "Verses for helping a Man's Memory," etc., from the second edition, and omit the Prayer for Communion and S Ambrose's Prayer to the Blessed Virgin.

* C. R. S., v, p. 3.

The present edition has been prepared directly from the 1610 edition. A few obvious errors have been corrected; where there seemed to be any doubt reference has been made to the Latin edition of 1547; and the spelling has been modernized throughout.

THE EPISTLE OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE FAITHFUL SOUL seems to be in no need of further recommendation, whether as regards its original or its English translation. If only for the reason that it was a book beloved of our forefathers in the days of persecution in England and comes to us with something of reflected glory from the halo of its translator's martyrdom, it should be of interest to English-speaking Catholics of to-day. But it has, in addition, all that persuasiveness amidst its austerity which is characteristic of the school to which it belongs, that of the affective writers of the Low Countries;* and thus it is not unworthy of the place often given it beside the greatest book of that school, teaching as it does the same lesson, the Imitation of Christ.

The editor's thanks are due to the Very

* The intimacy of Gerard Groote and the earlier Brothers of the Common Life with Carthusians will not be forgotten. See *The Founders of the New Devotion*, pp. 9, 14 *seqq*. London: Kegan Paul, 1905.

Rev. Father Robert Bracey, O.P., Prior of Woodchester, for the loan of his copy of the 1610 edition of the EPISTLE, and to the General Editor of this series for his advice and kindly encouragement.

S HUGH'S CHARTERHOUSE,
PARTRIDGE GREEN,
SUSSEX.
October 17, 1925.

TO THE

REVERENDE MOTHER

AND

DEVOUT POOR SISTERS

of the holy Order of *S CLARE*
in the first English Convent
erected in Graveling.*

THIS brief but most excellent Epistle of *Jesus Christ to the Faithful Soul;* (Religious Poor Sisters) worthy, no doubt, both of the Author's piety and Translator's virtue, being so much by you and others desired, and now the third time printed, I have thought it both to your profit and for your consolation to present the same unto YOU, as a mirror or looking-

* This community was founded in 1608 by Mary Ward at S Omer's, but transferred to Gravelines the following year. The Abbess here addressed is Mother Mary Goudge or Gough, first Abbess († 1612). An affiliation from Gravelines was made at Rouen in 1644, which community survives at Clare Abbey, Darlington. The Mother House, however, fell into decay, and in 1838 was handed over to Ursulines from Boulogne, now represented by the community at Croom's Hill, Greenwich. See C. R. S., xiv, pp. 25 *seqq.*, and *S Clare and her Order*, p. 214. London: Mills and Boon, 1912.

glass, who, being now entered into the path of Virtue, do earnestly endeavour to arrive to the height of Christian Religious Perfection; especially at this time, when almost all virtuous life and devotion in our Country, by the unfortunate sway of Schism and Heresy, lieth, as it were, languishing and sick even unto death itself, that by this means some little sparks of piety may be conserved alive within the embers of your religious breasts, thereby to enkindle and inflame the hearts, not only of those who, by your virtuous example, shall follow your footsteps, but of others also into whose hands this Golden Treatise, so particularly due unto yourselves for the rare documents of perfection it containeth shall happily come.

Our sweet Saviour increase daily your earnest desire of Religious Piety, and preserve you ever.
Amen.

Your servant in Christ Jesus,

I. W. PRIEST.

THE EPISTLE OF THE AUTHOR

TO THE

VENERABLE MOTHER

AND

RELIGIOUS VIRGINS

of the Order called *Premonstratensis*, dedicated to Christ in the Monastery of *Hensberch:*

IOANNES LANSPERGIUS

Prior of the Carthusians

wisheth grace and peace.

NO man I suppose to be so ignorant (devout Virgins) as to think this ensuing speech or exhortation, ascribed to our Blessed Saviour Christ, was either spoken by his own mouth or made by him personally when he lived here on earth; but that it is therefore styled with so glorious a title because it containeth that very doctrine which is truly and really Christ's, as his divine inspirations do daily witness. Which doctrine is not only felt

inwardly in our hearts, but is also here set down in characters, as if Christ himself did seem to speak unto us both in word and writing. And, indeed, man's mind is so much the more vehemently stirred up to listen and obey, by how much he doth now feel and receive this doctrine, as it were, not from man, but from Christ. For who can doubt but that every doctrine doth so much the more delight and persuade the reader, by how much he who teacheth the same is of greater dignity and estimation? Seeing then, we greatly wish that the hearts of all such as shall read this book should be enlightened with the spirit of Christ, we do therefore persuade all men to read the same, not in our own but in Christ's name, whereby everyone may make himself worthy of such a spirit. For the dulness of our spirit, so long as we remain in this our corruptible body, hath this property, that it is soonest moved, stirred up and extended towards God with sensible things and such as are more familiar to human understanding. And for this cause hath the holy Church received the divers ceremonies in her divine service which nowadays she useth, as organs, singing and other the sundry or nature thereof; as also in like manner are the images and pictures of Christ and of his saints, before which the common people do exercise their devotion;

as when, in beholding them they are either moved with the remembrance of Christ's benefits towards them, or stirred up to imitate their examples of sanctity, or else, turning themselves to Christ, do offer up the worship of their devotion, not to stocks or stones, but unto him whose person the image representeth. For although we are not ignorant that the picture of Christ which we see is not Christ, yet, notwithstanding, the devotion of him that prayeth before it doth no otherwise worship it than Christ himself, whose picture it is, because his mind is not then carried (or fixed) upon the picture but upon him whom it representeth. In like manner may this Epistle or Exhortation of Jesus Christ be read; not for that it was either written or spoken by himself, but as it were written by him, seeing that whatsoever is here either taught or said is daily spoken by Christ inwardly to the devout soul, his spouse.

YOU, therefore, devoted Virgins of Christ who have contemned the vanities of this world, read the Exhortations of your espouse Christ Jesus, which, by a secret kind of inspiration (if you mark it) he continually breatheth into your hearts. And in so doing shall you read those things whereof you may be inwardly admonished, if you will vouchsafe to give ear and hearken what is said. For that herein is contained a Rule to live

rightly and piously in the service of God, instructing you in all spiritual conversation. And for this cause I have thought it convenient to write and dedicate the same to your holy Congregation, imitating herein the devotion of our Blessed *Father Denis of Roermond*, no less famous for sanctity of life than learning, who, whilst he lived, dedicated many devout works unto consecrated virgins, and especially to your holy Convent; as for example, *Of the Profession of Nuns*;* *Of Lively Mortification and Internal Reformation*;† *Of Spiritual Profit and Watch over the Heart*;‡ etc. Therefore, when as I perceive that you desire nothing more than to have some chaste and pious doctrine instilled into you (for which cause you do so greatly honour all those that be devoutly learned), I doubt not but that, this your desire being satisfied, you will transfer your cogitations from men to God. Desire, therefore, earnestly this his doctrine, and think that Christ speaketh unto you in these

Exhortations, as it were in an
Epistle from himself.
Farewell.

* *Vide* D. Dionysii Cartusiani, Opera Omnia (Monsterolii-Tornaci-Parkmonasterii, 1896–1913), t. xxxviii, p. 161 *seqq.*

† *Ibid.*, t. xl, p. 85 *seqq.*

‡ *Ibid*, *idem*, p. 469 *seqq.*

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AN EPISTLE OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE FAITHFUL SOUL

JESUS CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD AND KING OF

Heaven and Earth, being ready to embrace those that earnestly and truly desire his grace, with his merciful and fatherly arms, wisheth to his Spouse, that is, to the soul which loveth him—for whose sake he willingly suffered death that he might unite her to himself—all perfect and true felicity.

O MY dearly beloved Daughter, I have spoken to thy heart in secret inspirations but thou wouldst never give ear unto my motions. Wherefore, since thou didst care little to answer me, much less to obey me, I am enforced by the great love I bear thee to write unto thee, that at the least thou mayest be content to read what thou didst neglect to hear, and, by reading, both better bear away my exhortation and more deeply imprint it in the mind. For that charity,

which moved me to offer myself not only to danger, but even to death itself for thy sake, will not suffer me to leave anything undone that may tend to the furtherance of thy salvation. And although thou dost not in any sort requite my love, because thy heart is inclined to outward, vain and transitory things, and so, by that means, too much affected and addicted to my creatures, yet cannot I withdraw that charity, wherewith I am always ready to embrace thee, which exceedeth the love of any father or mother towards their children, or of any earthly parent whatsoever. For I am not only willing to grant thee my grace and favour, but desirous to accept thee for my spouse, and will daily enrich thee with greater and better blessings than any that this world can yield thee if thou wilt follow my counsel. But for that thou hast contemned me when I came to visit thee, and hast not hearkened to my inspirations, thou art become by this evil custom of thine so much distracted in thy soul, and so far beside thyself, as thou art neither able to conceive what thou hast lost, nor yet the misery wherein thou art. And the less thou dost bewail and lament thine own misery, the more doth thy case deserve to be pitied and lamented.

2. What shall I say, O my Daughter? Thou shouldst be an example to others

and thy life an instruction to those that go astray. The sweet savour of thy good conversation ought to be a wholesome medicine for the curing of such as are weakened with the infection of sin: and thy words as a consuming fire, to inflame the hearts of those that hear them. But now thou art thyself so corrupted with the desire of childish vanities, so busied with a multitude of unprofitable matters, and so subject to many hurtful passions, as thou art distracted in thy soul; and hast so much polluted it with filthiness, as it is possessed with wandering thoughts and vain imaginations. Self-love doth as yet reign in thee, and till thou mortify that, thou canst never enter into my chamber, or be partaker of my delights. So that thou, which oughtest to teach others, standest now in need of being taught thyself. I write not this to the end that I mean to reject thee, but because I would let thee know how far thou hast erred, and am desirous that thou shouldst understand thy own loss and danger: and I do not only allure thee, but I do also prick thee forward to return from thence home again unto me.

3. Wheresoever thou art, whatsoever thou dost, or whithersoever thou goest, my eye is never off from thee, looking and searching into all thy acts, all thy motions, and all the secret intentions of thy heart. And if at

any time I spy in any of these the least unfaithfulness to me, who am most faithful, I am justly offended and angry. For I did suffer, not only with all patience but even with all willingness, many despites, reproaches, griefs and torments for thy sake.

4. O my most dear daughter—to pass over in silence all the pains and torments which I did endure—tell me, I pray thee, what man would have suffered so many and so great disgraces for his friend, as I did for thee? And yet I endured them when thou wert mine enemy, when thou hadst done no good at all, when thou didst neither love nor know me, yea before thou wert born did I love thee and suffer these grievous and innumerable torments for thee. When then wilt thou turn away thyself from me? Why dost thou seek quietness without me? Thou art sickly, and yet wilt wander abroad. If I forsake thee who will receive thee? Who can cure thee? Alas my daughter, how far art thou deceived? Whithersoever thou turnest thine eyes, or upon whatsoever thou dost fix thy mind, yet shalt thou find no peace, no joy, nor any rest, but in me only. Thy senses deceive thee, and they which seem to love thee, do abuse thee, and thou also dost deceive thyself, when thou refusest a sovereign medicine that would help thee, and receivest rank poison, which will kill thee.

5. Alas my daughter, alas my spouse, I know how often beautiful and goodly things in show, but vain things in deed—which when they profess most love and faith unto thee, are most ready to beguile thee—do allure thy senses and draw thy affection; and how often also they deceive thee with their snares, and lead thee from me with their guiles. O dear daughter, remember that thou art a spouse, and let not the love of any other thing, but only thy husband enter into thy heart. Desire nothing but his favour, that thou mayest be beautiful in his eyes, and please him, and be forever beloved of him. I stand desiring thee, and waiting for thee, I wish that thou wouldst return unto me with all thy heart, and forsaking all these vanities, apply thyself wholly to devotion, and give thyself daily to humility, that I might then vouchsafe to talk with thee in more familiar sort, and rejoice thy mind, with far better and purer delights than those wherein thou hast lain drowned.

6. I require no multitude of works at thy hands, wherewith to trouble thee, but a chaste, faithful, and pure heart, which may seek to please me, and not delight itself. I desire a sincere love, and a fervent devotion, that is, a ready and forward will to honour and obey me, and a sincere and pure intention in performing of all those things that I

command. I wish that thy heart should be clear and free from any other love whatsoever, and if thou wouldst present it to me in this sort, I would endue thee with greater consolations and far more excellent blessings than either thou darest presume to desire, or art able to conceive. I am a husband that is bashful, and therefore will never come unto thee when I see thee busied with other matters altogether vain and unprofitable. When I come, I must find thee alone, for I stand knocking at thy door, being very weak, and quaking for cold, even in the same form that I carried when I was unloosed from the Pillar, whereto being bound I was whipped and wounded for thy sake. And this I do, that I may make an impression of myself in thy mind, wounded as I was, and that thou embracing me with the arms of thy love, I may unite thee unto me, and inflame thee with my wounds, that do yet boil with the fervent heat of that charity which I carry towards thee.

7. Oh! if thou wouldst acknowledge me for thy husband, and love me as thou oughtest to do, wouldst thou not both quickly draw me into thy heart, and also before I came, with a most desirous will, attend and long for my coming; and wouldst thou not then clothe the naked, and give fire to warm him that is cold, that thou mightest be made

worthy to receive again the chaste embracings of my love, and to enjoy the sweet taste of my spirit.

8. How much would it please me, that thou hadst a certain and firm trust in me, and wert as willing to be with me as I am desirous to be with thee, seeing all my delight consisteth in being with the children of men. So should the fortitude of thy mind be daily augmented, and the true sweetness of thy soul continually increased. But this trust in me can never be without a distrust in thyself, and both these graces are only obtained by poverty of spirit, which is a most precious jewel. But I know well enough what doth withhold thee from attaining to this virtue: thy stomach is overlaid with the love of this world, and by that means infected with such extreme coldness, as it maketh thee to loathe and abhor the word of God, which is the food of thy soul. But if thou desire to increase in virtue, and to strengthen thy mind with the following of that course, thou must receive the word of God greedily, digest it perfectly, and still retain the nourishment of that within thee.

9. The reason therefore that thou canst not thirst after my justice is because thou art already filled with the cold meats of worldly conversation and vanity, and that is the cause also why these things do delight

thee, which savour neither of piety nor devotion. Simplicity of heart is loathsome unto thee, and the exercise of holy meditations thou accountest as time lost. Thy mind being laden with the cares of this world cannot ascend up unto me. For although thou raisest it by force for a while, yet it presently falleth down again into her earthly cogitations; so that, thy soul being distracted, thy heart inconstant, thy mind wavering, and thy desires ensnared with the love of worldly pleasure, thou art troubled when thou art awake, and not quiet when thou art asleep.

10. And when thou liest in this misery, O unwise daughter, then thou complainest that thou art dry and barren, without my consolation. If this did happen unto thee by means of my providence—as it hath to many other of my friends—and not by thine own negligence, there were no reason why the wanting of this sensible grace of mine should molest thy soul. But seeing thy own sloth and negligence is the cause that thou liest languishing in this barren dryness, if thou desire my consolation, if thou wish for my coming, if thou do long to be united unto me, thou must forsake all those vanities that do please thee without me, and only study to serve me, endeavouring continually to perform those things which agree best with my

liking, and are most pleasing unto me. And making this thy chiefest care, thou must labour with all thy force and might to see my will, as near as thou canst, in all creatures fulfilled. Moreover, in doing hereof, let thy whole study be to content me, and to rely only upon me. So shalt thou find my presence more often with thee, and by it thy spirit shall be, as it were, made drunk with joy; thy conscience shall be comforted; thy heart quieted; and thou shalt then possess the perfect rest of most sweet contemplation.

11. Oh, if thou hadst once come into that wine-cellar, out of doubt thou wouldst even with a certain thirstiness, more earnestly desire to be there, and more often. But no man can enter into it, saving such as desire me above all things, love me above all things, esteem me above all things, and make account of me as all in all. For he that findeth no other consolation but in me, he that thinketh himself unworthy to receive any consolation from me, nay, he that desireth affliction so much in this world that he taketh himself to be wronged when I send him any consolation at all, and doth as willingly accept it at my hands, when I leave his soul barren without any comfort, as when I replenish it with my consolation, to whom all joy without me is a torment, having his mind

wholly fixed upon me, and his desire only bent to serve me. Such men as these are, I say, my special friends, at whose door I do freely knock, and willingly enter; these are the men to whom I gladly offer myself, and impart my secrets. These men I am wont to visit in sundry sorts, as seemeth fittest in my judgement, by stirring them up in such manner as is meet and agreeable for the devotion and love which they bear me.

12. Sometimes I present myself to the eyes of their souls, wounded, naked, and tormented in all my members, and that they may find greater comfort in the love they bear me, I show them my wounds, to the end that they may touch them, bathe them, cleanse them, kiss them, and embrace them. And although their devotion in this behalf may seem to worldly men ridiculous, because they know not what it meaneth, yet is it most acceptable to me and most profitable to them. For then I begin to forget all the pains which I have suffered, and also all the faults which such a spouse of mine hath committed against me, and do wholly bend myself to comfort her with my spirit and to lighten her with my grace.

13. And although I stand not in need of anything, yet I make account I have gained much, when I find so great fidelity in my spouse, as she loveth me better than either

herself, or all the world besides. But unthankfulness doth offend me, as much as fidelity doth content me, and is of all things most grievous unto me, because by it they seek to renew—as much as lieth in them—the griefs of my passion, and vexations of my mind; seeing, I perceive, that all is lost, which I did with an unspeakable charity endure for them. Therefore, whether outward affliction of thy body, or inward affliction of thy mind happen unto thee, seek not for external comforts, which are nothing worth, but in all thy distress fly unto me, and make no complaint of thy grief unto any man, but to me only. For what greater help can men yield thee than in giving thee fair words? If thou hast a Ghostly Father or Confessor, I forbid thee not to disclose it unto him, but I exhort thee to lay open before him the secrets of thy heart, and to direct thyself in all respects according to his counsel, without yielding in any way to satisfy the fury of thy passion, or labouring for some external comfort, or boasting before others of those vexations which thou dost suffer.

14. Declare unto me in secret that which thou wouldst complain of before men, committing thyself and all things to my providence, being quiet without any care or perturbation of thy mind. Thou shalt find, believe me, a happy peace in thy soul,

and great consolation by this course, at my hands, although not such, peradventure, at all times as thou dost imagine or wish for, yet such as may most conform thee to my will and pleasure.

15. Oh! if thou wert taught and accustomed by thine own experience in all worldly things which trouble thee to have thine eye only fixed upon me, to fly unto me for refuge, to hope in my mercy with a patient expecting of the same, to rely upon me, and withal, to conceive with how fatherly and loving a mind I send thee adversity for thy benefit; there should be no tribulation so great that thou wouldst not with all gladness and willingness accept; yea, and prefer it before all joy and consolation whatsoever. For albeit thou shouldst receive no other commodity by it, yet this were sufficient to comfort and rejoice thy mind, that it is a fulfilling of my will. If my will be done, it doth always please the faithful soul, more than receiving of any other benefit, although in truth my will be never but to do that which may be most for her commodity.

16. It will also help thee very much for retaining a quiet mind in all adversity, to lay before thy eyes the acts and miseries of my life, and evermore to carry within thee a lively representation thereof. For if thou do imprint this in thy mind, it will make thee

think all bitter things sweet. Meditate, therefore, at all times upon my torments, and desire at my hands continually, with sighs and tears, that I may vouchsafe to make a strong and an effectual impression in thy heart of my wounds and passion, that thou mayest see me crucified at all times, and in all places, with a heart that doth even suffer with me; and let the lively representation hereof banish from thy soul all other imaginations whatsoever. If thou return in this sort from all outward to inward things, and shalt dwell within thine own self; if thou behold in thy heart my grievous torments, and myself crucified; if thou hear me cry, when I was replenished with all sorrow and bitterness, and not relieved with any consolation from my Father, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* thou shalt, being inflamed with the virtue of my passion, have a desire to imitate me, to suffer for me, and to serve me without any comfort at all, in contempt and resignation of thyself.

17. They that serve me with this mind, and are united unto me for mere love only, and continue faithful unto me without any other respect but to please me, and to have my will wholly fulfilled in them, these men, I say, are my faithfullest and most special friends. And in what dryness or desolation soever they may seem to be, and with what

temptations soever they may seem to be overwhelmed, and, as it were, cast off and forsaken by me, yet in truth they are still mine, because they fight manfully at their own charge, for my cause against the whole army of wicked temptations, which do continually assault men in the warfare of this present world; and will not revolt from my camp, although I sometimes strike and punish them.

18. But I do not altogether leave them; for seeing they have conquered all their passions, and renounced all their own appetites to please me, and for my sake; yea, and have even altogether forsaken themselves, and given themselves only to me, in being subject only to my will; I cannot hold, but I must also pour myself into them, and both fill, nourish, and possess their souls with my comfort, which is an hundred times better, purer, and sweeter than the worldly pleasure which they have forsaken. They cannot receive this—as I have often told thee, and will not cease to beat into thy mind —which do seek or accept of any foreign comfort that proceedeth not from me, or is not in me. For my consolation is wonderful sweet, and bestowed only upon such as will admit no other. It is also most pure, and therefore cannot be mixed with any consolation that is derived from my creatures. But

why do I so often repeat these things unto thee? Truly, I do it to make thee more wise, watchful, and circumspect, and to the end that thou shouldst not be snared with these corrupt and earthly delights, nor yet be brought by them to forget me, seeing I can never forget thee, although thy salvation only dependeth upon my providence, and not mine upon thee in any sort.

19. I wish also that thou shouldst be continually with me, and by being with me enjoy all felicity. But why do I not fulfil this? Marry, even for thy good, that thou mayest increase in virtue and merits, to the great profit of thy soul, and thy greater glory. For thou mayest by my grace daily increase in goodness, and be made every moment more rich in merit. Wherefore, seeing this is so, how foolish dost thou think them to be, and how much to be lamented, who do spend the most precious time of grace that I have allotted unto them, not only not to my honour and their own profit, but to the heavier aggravating of their damnation by wicked life? Oh, that thou knewest how much thou mightest increase in the virtues of thy soul, and in merit by my grace, every hour, and also how dear a jewel time is, and how damnable the loss thereof. For thou wouldst then out of doubt, take care with more diligence that the smallest moment

should not pass thee vainly, nor yet slip away without reaping some benefit to thy soul. With the sun rising every day, there should then arise a new joy in thy mind, that I had granted thee the commodity of that day, and by it so much longer space to honour and serve me. Think, therefore, and say every hour unto thyself: Our Lord which loveth me hath vouchsafed to give me this hour, this moment, and hath prolonged the course of my life hitherto, that I should even now begin to turn unto him, and endeavour myself to please him.

20. O my daughter, ever above all things carry this opinion, that the present moment wherein thou livest is the first time wherein thou beginnest to do well, and contemn all that thou hast done before as nothing worth. What occasion soever, what business soever, what idle time soever, or what other things soever either may or shall happen unto thee, use them in such sort as thou employ them to my glory, and convert them to some benefit of thy own soul. But this, in this behalf, is sufficient. For I have hitherto stirred thee up, and excited thee to depart from all vanities, with shutting the gates of thy senses against them, and to return unto me with a recollected and quiet mind.

21. It remaineth now that I add unto this, as it were, a rule to teach thee how to live

godly, which I have heard thee, by the inspiration of my grace, desire often at my hands. For there remaineth as yet bashfulness in thee (which I like well), and which maketh thee ashamed in the opening of thy infirmities, faults, errors, and negligences; and also grieved that thou hast this long time heretofore, and dost even at this present, so unworthily usurp the name of my Spouse. But seeing thou desirest to return into my grace, there is nothing that I likewise do more affect or desire. For what other joy have I in being among you, than to receive every sinner into my favour? How much more then do I desire, or rather long—as may in reason be justly thought—to bring my spouse home unto me, when she goeth astray amongst the briers and thorns of worldly vanities; nay, I am so desirous to recall thee, as I will prescribe thee a plain path, wherein, if thou walkest, thou shalt be sure to follow my steps, and never wander again out of thy way. Come, therefore, unto me, and by thy return procure me a new joy, such as I delight in most, and desire ever to possess.

CHAPTER I

A RULE FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

MARK well, my daughter, for since I see thee give better care, and apply thy mind with more diligence to carry away my speeches, I will proceed in declaring those things unto thee, which I require at thy hands. Continue, therefore, attentive, and return now wholly unto me, being ready in all things to obey me. Put on a new mind, and hear what I expect that thou shouldst do, and what thou art not able of thyself to do, let prayer assist thee to fulfil.

2. Seek to obtain by prayer whatsoever is necessary for thee, saying: Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord, I fly unto thee for succour; teach me to do thy will because thou art my God. Leave me not, O Lord my God, and depart not from me; neither yet despise me, who art the God of my salvation. Incline thyself to help me, O Lord, the God of my safety. Behold I desire to return unto thee, draw me after thee, and never suffer me again to be separated or withdrawn from thee. O my daughter, hearken now to that which

I gave in commandment to one of my servants long ago, and endeavour thou also to fulfil it. I said unto him:

> Use ever silence in thy tongue,
> And have compunction in thy mind;
> Be humble, courteous, meek, and mild,
> If thou in me wilt comfort find.

3. The same words in the same form do I speak unto thee, having made it in the true measure of a verse, although thou shalt have less need of a measure to direct thee when thou art come to this perfection. But I do not now deliver it unto thee, as framed in measure to please thy ears, but as a sovereign medicine to cure thy soul. I have comprehended all those things, which are necessary for thee, briefly in this verse, that thou mayest more easily retain them in thy memory, and more often meditate upon them in thy mind. For my will is, that thou shouldst altogether apply thy endeavour to have a holy compunction for thy sins, and that, leaving all other business aside, thou shouldst only attend to a continual and internal conversation, and remaining weaned from all other pleasures, to be recollected into thine own self, and so to continue always free from any distraction or perturbation whatsoever. Be silent in thy tongue, and pure from all filthiness in thy heart. Be humble and meek,

and remember to show thyself both courteous and gentle in all thy behaviour towards all sorts of men.

4. First of all, diligently examine thyself, and look most nearly and narrowly into thyself, that thou mayest know what is in thee which is an impediment to thee for the receiving of my grace, that is to say, what is in thee which doth displease me, that thou mayest correct and amend it. Consider to what things, and by what means, thou art tempted, and where thou seest thyself most sharply and oftenest tempted, there seek to resist them with greatest diligence, and most earnest endeavour. Where thou findest thyself weaker, there apply more forcible remedies quickly to vanquish them. Where thou perceivest any occasion which moveth thee to sin, or not to profit in this spiritual course, there cut off that scandal and impediment from thee.

5. Have special care to present unto me a pure heart, free from all uncleanness, and neither infected with any inordinate love to my creatures, nor occupied with any unnecessary business in this world, and labour evermore with all that thou art able, wholly to cleave unto me, and still to rely upon me. The cause why I do exhort thee to a continual exercise of compunction is that by it thou mayest keep thyself free from foreign or

wandering thoughts, which thou canst never attain unto, except thou be recollected in thy mind. Neither canst thou come to be thus recollected, except thou lead an internal and solitary life, private to thyself and withdrawn from all worldly affairs. Wherefore, mark with a watchful eye those vices, concupiscences, and wicked inclinations which reign in thee, that thou mayest never cease with all thy might to persecute them, and willingly to mortify in thyself all inordinate affections.

6. Many complain that they are unapt for contemplation and spiritual life, but their own negligence and sloth is the cause; for that they will strain themselves no whit to conquer their old man, that they may mortify all lusts and concupiscences, but do nourish, cherish, and favour them which they ought to persecute and root out of their minds. Therefore they carry always about with them a heavy burden of unquiet thoughts, filled with labour and vexation; but if thou desire to enjoy me, have no peace at all with any vice. Banish from thee all unprofitable discourses, cares, and businesses which yield no benefit at all to thy soul. And never apply thy mind to the thinking of any other matter, nor trouble thyself with any other affairs but such as tend to my honour, the salvation of thy own soul, or the commodity of thy

neighbour, that thou being thus alone, and in this sort retired within thyself, mayest be possessed with me, who will never be matched with any other companion.

CHAPTER II

HOW WE MUST MORTIFY ALL UNLAWFUL DESIRES AND WICKED INCLINATIONS

VOUCHSAFE not to hear, much less to read, any news, tidings, or pleasant histories, which serve not to procure a compunction in thy heart, but to delight a curious mind, and afterwards do leave thy soul corrupted and infected with sundry imaginations and vain desires. Fly any special familiarity, liking, or conversation with worldly men, that is to say, with those that love these earthly pleasures; yea, enter not into any league of familiarity, good-will and special conversation with any such men, whose words and deeds do not edify thee in this virtuous course, but avoid their company, and mortify all sensual love in thyself towards any of my creatures.

2. Have such a command over thy belly as that thou allow it only necessary things, and that also not for the pleasing of thy taste, but for the sustaining of nature, and

for my sake, that by this means thou mayest not decay, but increase in ability to serve me. Moreover, never receive anything to delight thy taste which is not necessary and profitable for thy body, and especially when thou mayest observe this without the breach of brotherly charity. Root out also from thy mind after this sort, and fail not both to fly and abhor all pleasant things, all voluptuous things, and all such things as seem sweet to thy carnal appetite—as far as discretion will permit thee, which doth qualify all extremity, ever having a respect to charity, to infirmity, to the necessity of nature, and to every other thing that is convenient—and evermore take a special care that in this government of thyself thou dost prosecute concupiscence, but not destroy nature.

3. And as touching those things which are necessary, and yet cannot be received without some delight, it is sufficient for thee if thou dost not seek that delight but in respect of me, that is, to obey me who have committed the care of thy body to thyself to refresh the infirmity of thy nature, so as thou takest this delight not as a thing which thou wishest for, but as a thing that cannot be separated from that which is necessary for man's use, admitting it only for necessity, and not desiring it for pleasure. Therefore, to be short, have such a care and watch over

all thy senses as they may not move or turn themselves to any vain or unprofitable things. See nothing, touch nothing, know nothing, but that which may be profitable for thy soul and my glory.

4. Whereinsoever a man doth follow his own appetite, seeking to satisfy it of a proper and self will, that is to say, because he will have it so, or because he hath a desire thereunto, he must needs offend, for he that desireth anything in this sort, whether it be in meat, drink, or any other thing to refresh nature, or else in seeking the delight of some spiritual consolation, it cannot be done without sin, because there is in it a particular care to please his own fancy, which doth divide and separate him clean from me. Suffer nothing, therefore, to grow in thee, or to be nourished by thee which carrieth any respect to satisfy thy own liking or to content thy own will, although it may seem to have an appearance of goodness. But thou must die to all love of thyself, and all desire of following thy own appetite, that a naked, a simple, and a pure charity, without mixture of any other thing whatsoever, and a chaste intention to please me, may stir, move, and procure thee to all the thoughts thou thinkest, to all the words thou speakest, and to all the works thou doest.

CHAPTER III

HOW A MAN OUGHT TO GOVERN HIS TONGUE

HAVE as watchful a care as thou mayest over thy tongue, and restrain it from all liberty. Suffer it to utter nothing but that which is necessary and well thought of before, and in as few words as it is possible to comprehend the same, with all modesty and meekness, and without any great noise or loud speaking, flying and cutting off, by all the means thou art able, anything that may either occasionate or procure thee to speak.

2. Abstain from all words that are any way hurtful, backbiting, grudging, unclean, or contentious, as from a mortal sin. Have a special regard to keep thyself from all jesting, lightness, immoderate laughter, and idle words, and be so careful in this behalf, as neither thou usest them thyself nor yet hear them of any other, as far as it lieth in thy power to avoid it.

3. And to the end that thou mayest be free from that great vice of backbiting, resolve thou in thine own heart never to speak anything of those which are absent, but such things as thou art sure do tend to the edifying of men's souls. Ever have some means ready at hand to break off that talk—

if there be any speech offered of those that be absent—by bringing aptly in a discourse of some other matter, before there be any word uttered either in the backbiting or dispraising of them.

4. Take a most diligent and heedful care that thou speakest not thyself, nor sufferest any other to speak of those which have offended thee, or towards whom thou findest in thy heart no perfect charity, because men so easily fall by that means into the vice of backbiting, while they speak to please thy humour by flattering of thee, and reproaching of those that thou dost mislike. Therefore, never hearken to any accusation that is made of them which are thine enemies, or such as thou dost not love.

5. Endeavour as much as thou canst to remain always in silence—I mean not only the silence of thy tongue, but especially the silence of thy heart—so as there may not be heard within thy soul any sound of unlawful concupiscence, any noise of unquiet passions, or any troublesome stir of wicked affections and inordinate inclinations. Neither suffer thou unprofitable discourses to arise in thine own heart, with any vain fancies, fond imaginations, or the deceitful forms of such things as thou shalt have there represented unto thee; but even as if thou hadst forgotten all other things whatsoever, and wert

out of this world, in quietness and silence speak to me only, and hearken unto me wholly.

6. Never strive with any man in words, neither speak stiffly to maintain thy own mind or opinion. Suffer every man to have his saying, if thou canst not dissuade him by gentle words or do him good by some mild exhortation. And, to conclude, resolve thyself neither to dispute in words, neither yet reason in thine own thoughts against him, but refer all things unto me, and live thou in all silence of thy tongue, and in all quietness of thy heart.

CHAPTER IV

OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE, WHICH IS WHOLLY WITHDRAWN FROM THE CARES AND AFFAIRS OF THIS PRESENT WORLD

Fly the society and familiarity of men, and when thou art not otherwise enforced by necessity for my honour, or for thy neighbour's salvation, be always alone, for when thou art alone then will I reveal myself unto thee. Solitariness, silence, purity and simplicity of heart do prepare a place for me to dwell in. Keep thyself, therefore, withdrawn from all creatures in silence and quietness of heart. Neither vouchsafing to

consent, nor yet to hearken to the unlawful appetites of thy will, the wandering cogitations of thy mind, or the vain desires of thy heart. For thy nature, I know, is ever inclined to delight in consolation, and is always occupied, sometimes with outward labour in thy body, and sometimes with inward care in thy mind, seeking consolation in my creatures, whereby thou comest to be many and sundry ways distracted.

2. Remember thou, therefore, to strive with all thy force against all thy sensual and carnal inclinations, and keep thyself alone, being withdrawn from all creatures, and remaining ever, both in outward solitariness of thy body and inward contemplation of thy mind, as far as discretion, which must be thy guide, obedience to thy superiors, and charity to thy neighbours, will permit thee. Take care, also, as much as conveniently thou mayest, not to give others by thy example, any occasion of often meetings or common familiarity, because it doth very much hinder the spiritual course of life, which is never so free from any impediment, nor so apt to profit itself, as when it is separated from all sorts of men and all kinds of business. Yet, howsoever thou shalt chance to be, either living amongst men, or sequestered from the society of men, remain with me always alone, recollected within

thy own soul and withdrawn not only from all other creatures, but even from thine own self, that is, from all liking to procure thine own pleasure, from all care to seek thine own commodity, and from all desire to serve thine own appetite.

3. Persuade thyself that thou art left alone in this world and hast nothing to care for but me, and, therefore, think of no other matter and deal with no other creature but with me only. Examine not other men's actions and trouble not thyself with other men's affairs. If thou seest that which is good, embrace it, and let it edify thee; if thou seest that which is evil, leave it, but give no judgement of it.

4. Beware of observing, marking, examining, or judging of such men's speeches, actions and manners as cannot by their holy and good example edify thee. Nay, be so far from doing this, as desire never to hear or understand them, but rather seek by all means not to know them at all. And if thou shalt happen by any chance to hear them, root them out of thy heart and endeavour to forget them as soon as thou canst, especially if thou standest in danger, by that means, to offend in the breach of charity, or to conceive a worse opinion of those parties.

CHAPTER V

HOW WE OUGHT TO JUDGE NO MAN

THINK ill of no man, and although he seemeth to thee to be wicked, yet believe that he hath been suffered to fall by some secret and hidden providence of mine, for the attaining of greater humility in himself, and procuring of greater profit to his soul. And thou oughtest neither to judge nor yet despise him, but lament rather thy own ingratitude towards me, because my grace only doth uphold thee, as it were violently, against thy will. And think that without it thou shouldst fall into greater and more heinous sins than any other. Therefore, say unto thyself: If this man had received so much grace as I have done, he would have served God a great deal more devoutly and been more thankful unto him than I have been.

2. Believe also, that as soon as I look upon him with the eyes of my mercy, he will presently repent and amend; or else, that he is already reformed and made more holy than those that despise him. Wherefore, ascribe thy ill conceit of him to thine own fault and rash judgement, and reprehend thyself sharply because thou hast thought

amiss of thy neighbour and done him wrong. Rancour, hatred, bitterness and envy, do many times hide themselves under the colour of zeal, which do make men to think not only every defect and light fault of their neighbour to be grievous, but also, to judge their virtues to be vices, their sights being dimmed with the foggy mist of malice and envy.

3. Take special heed, therefore, that thou neither reprehend nor accuse any man, nor yet either speak or hear of any man's faults when thou art angry. Beware also that thou dost not at that time seek to gall him, gainsay him, or grieve him with any word or show of thine; neither yet by chiding to procure humility and shamefacedness in him; or to declare that thou hast taken him in a fault worthy of reprehension and meet to be spoken of. And chiefly abstain from doing of this as long as displeasure, bitterness, or any troubled and unquiet passion doth remain in thy heart against him, and as long as thou dost desire to make others note him for his faults and offences, because thou hast neither zeal of charity, nor a sincere intention in thee at that time. For if thou hadst, thou wouldst rather be sorrowful and lament with him for his sins, and seek as much as thou couldst to excuse and cover before others thy brother's or sister's offence. And if they had made a great fault thou wouldst

then rebuke them in secret, not without grief in thy own soul, and wouldst pray earnestly unto me for them, with a heart that did even suffer with them for their offences, and were most lovingly and humbly affected towards them.

4. O my daughter, be diligent to know what thou wantest and what is fit for my spouse. And as for other men's faults, be deaf to hear them, dumb to utter them, and blind to see them. Tell me, my daughter, how great regard would a bashful virgin have of her behaviour if she stood in a king's presence, and saw his eyes continually fixed upon her? After the same sort, think how that I am in all places present with thee, and that thou standest always in my sight. Consider how great modesty there ought ever to be in thee, how great innocency of life, and, to be short, how great reverence thou oughtest to carry towards me, who do always behold and look with my piercing eyes into the depth of all thy acts, thoughts, passions, words, motions, intentions, and even the very secrets of thy heart.

5. Presume not, therefore, to do anything in my sight which thou darest not offer to do in the sight of one of my servants that were a very devout man, and so generally accounted, and of all men generally esteemed. For thou oughtest ever to fear the dreadful

presence of my almighty power and infinite Majesty, and to have it at all times, both laid before thy eyes and imprinted in thy heart, that by it thou mayest be stirred up to love and reverence me; and be careful in all things to please me since thou art continually in my sight.

6. Thou shouldst not have the peace of thy soul, which thou dost in all places desire, to depend upon men's mouths, that is, to be quiet when no man doth gainsay thee, but to rest upon me and a good conscience. Moreover, thou oughtest to mortify that appetite in thyself which doth provoke thee, with an earnest desire and delight, to be beloved and commended of men. Suffer men to be men still, and apply thyself only to love me, that thou mayest be worthy to stand highly in my favour. Live uprightly with thy neighbour and love him for my sake. Neither care thou whether he love thee again or not, but leave it to me, and fly the familiarity both of men and women, but especially of those that be not of thine own sex.

7. If thou hadst as great a care, or at the least, no less respect to please me than thou hast not to displease men, thou shouldst obtain by it greater consolation in thy soul than if all the world did seek for thy favour.

CHAPTER VI

HOW WE OUGHT TO FIGHT AGAINST VICE

Be stout and circumspect, to vanquish and purge thy soul of any imperfection, although it be never so little, for the least sin that offendeth me ought not to seem small in thy eyes, if thou dost perfectly love me. Call to mind the love that thou didst carry towards me heretofore, which made thee to contemn and forsake, for the love of me, thy parents, thy brethren, thy sisters, thy riches, thy honour, and whatsoever else that seemeth delightful in this present world; and, to conclude, even thyself, that is, thy flourishing youth and pleasantest years; how cometh it then, now to pass that thou art vanquished with a most light temptation and a vile motion of concupiscence?

2. Thou knowest best thyself how weak and negligent thou art for the most part, and how hardly thou art drawn to overcome vice, to beware of those snares which may endanger thy soul, to fly the occasions and provocations of sin, to renounce thy own will, and to amend the imperfections of thy heart. Renew, therefore, thy constant and former determination, resolving to persecute all vice in thyself, and not to suffer anything

to remain within thee that is contrary to my will, for any worldly gain whatsoever. Neglect not to do all those things which please me, and follow that course of life which I require at thy hands, and is fit for thy vocation, with all care and diligence. Use not to delay, neither leave those things undone which is thy duty to perform, and my right to receive, but do them with courage, stoutly, willingly, carefully, faithfully and devoutly.

3. Whensoever thou findest in thyself the motions of anger, concupiscence, wantonness, pride, and such like motions of vices, beware that thou dost not suffer them violently to break out of thee by any word or show; but seek, by bridling and resisting them, to suppress and extinguish them. The best and perfectest remedy against all kind of vice is to cast thyself when thou art tempted prostrate at my feet with all humility; to consider how thou wert made of nothing, and art nothing but by my grace; to turn unto me wholly, to repose all thy confidence in me, to call upon me by continual prayer, and perfectly to know that thou canst receive no succour nor remedy in this thy distress but from me only.

4. Seek to strengthen thine own infirmity in this sort every hour, and renew thy good purpose, ever persuading thyself that the

present instant wherein thou livest is the first time of thy beginning to do well. When it shall seem loathsome to thy nature or go against thy sensual appetite to take these labours, to enter into these combats and conflicts, and to do many other things which seem contrary and grievous to thy mind in this exercise of virtue, ever the more that thine own slothful humour shall repine at them, the more earnestly endeavour thou to overcome and mortify these passions.

5. Be not wearied with so holy a labour, neither cease thou to proceed in so good a course, lest it move me also to stay from pouring the influence of my grace into thee. Be afraid lest, if that thou yield thyself vanquished, or seemest tired by reason of thy sloth, my grace shall forsake thee, and that I will leave thee to follow thy own inventions, and with a dangerous kind of security, to satisfy thy own desires. For it is a manifest argument that I have then, for thy own deserts, both justly and clearly rejected thee, when thou feelest no worm of conscience gnawing within thee, nor any fear of my dreadful judgement.

6. Such as are in this state are in a most perilous case, for when they think peace nearest unto them, then cometh destruction suddenly upon them. Wherefore, fight thou manfully, and violently repress thine affec-

tions. Wish in this small conflict or affliction, how little soever it be, to yield me some recompense, as far as lieth in thy power, for those pains which, both living and dying, I endured for thy sake.

7. Be never wearied, therefore, with fighting against many temptations. Give not place, wax not faint, neither suffer thou thyself to be overcome with weakness in thy heart, nor desperation in thy mind, but persecute all vice with a continual and mortal hatred. And, as often as thou beginnest to faint, or to decline from thy former determination, so often rise again and make a new resolution.

8. One thing I must needs warn thee of, which hurteth thyself and offendeth me, which is, that thou art become sometimes so faint-hearted with thy faults and oversights, as that they move thee to waver in following of the good course that thou hast begun, and almost induce thee to despair. This is the cause that doth make thee sit solitary, pining, and consuming for very grief, and not to return unto me that thou mayest rise again, but even with a kind of despair to imagine that all thou hast done before is utterly lost and forgotten. And thou showest thyself by this kind of dealing to be proud, because, when thou didst seem to stand thou didst trust too much in thy own

force and ability, and that maketh thee now to be so greatly troubled and perplexed in thy mind, because thy hope did fail thee, and it fell out otherwise than thou didst expect or look for.

9. My will is, that thou shouldst not use the help of thy own force and endeavour, but utterly to distrust both in them and thyself, and to trust in me only; for, as long as thou thinkest otherwise thou art like every hour to come to ruin until thou learnest this lesson, that when thou reliest upon thyself, thine own strength is no greater help unto thee to make thee stand upright than if thou wert underpropped with a broken reed. But despair not in me, reposing a most firm hope and assured confidence in my mercy.

10. And touching thyself, I would have thee to despair after this sort: not to refuse thy own counsel, thy own industry, thy own travail and other things of such like kind which proceed from thyself. But I would have thee continually to use them, and yet not to rely upon them, neither yet would I have thee attribute any good thou receivest to thyself or to thine own diligence; for both thyself and all these abilities which thou hast, have not power to make thee withstand the smallest sin, except thou be assisted with my grace and mercy. Neither think thou that I will presently pour into thee, for one

earnest prayer, a few tears, or only one conflict against the temptation of sin, all graces, all virtues and all good gifts; or that I will for this send thee any sudden or extraordinary profit in thy spiritual course of life, or that thou shalt immediately come to attain to all piety and holiness.

11. I require at thy hands daily pains, unfeigned humbling of thyself, and a continual fidelity towards me in fighting against vice. I look also for a firm hope, and an assured trust in my mercy, and a constancy in thee that will neither be overcome with any assault, nor yet wearied with any travail. And when thou shalt find in thyself all these things which I have named, let there not want a most profound humility, whereby thou mayest be brought perfectly to know thyself, and to confess that, as thou wert made of nothing by my mercy, so thou art nothing but by my grace, attributing nothing to thy own labour and travail, and acknowledging that thou hast deserved nothing, but ascribing thy thirst after justice, and all other good things which thou doest, to me only.

12. Except thou knowest these things thou canst not but err, and must of necessity fall often, until thou come to learn what thou art of thyself, and what thou art by my grace. I forbid thee not, but exhort thee to labour

as much as thou canst, and to strive for virtue as much as thou art able; and when thou hast done all, trust not in any remedy, nor in any industry of thine own, that is, without me, but hope of this, pray for this, and believe this certainly, that I will never fail to assist thee in all thy diligent and virtuous labours, not in respect of thine own deserts, but in respect of the love and charity which I bear thee. For seeing that I have given thee a will, a desire, and an inclination to fight, I will also grant thee for thy labour in fight, if thou perseverest to the end, a crown of glory, a triumph of victory, and a most happy end of thy combat.

13. Wherefore, whether thou beest in war or at peace with thyself, whatsoever thou dost determine, whatsoever thou beginnest, or whatsoever thou dost enterprise, crave without ceasing my assistance by prayer, and wait before the gates of my mercy. Thy prayers shall never return from me void and fruitless, although thou think thou hast received nothing; for it is often more profitable for thee to pray humbly and earnestly than to receive and obtain benefits. It is often more gainful for thee to trust in me and expect my leisure, than sensibly to feel or possess my consolation. Wherefore, be thou patient and long-suffering, and increasing in all good exercises and in the love of

all that is good, between falling and rising, ever expect thou my grace and protection. Neither seek to fly or to run away from the battle until the fight be fully ended and the time be come for thee to receive a glorious reward for thy painful travail.

14. And because thou mayest be the rather encouraged to proceed in this labour, assure thyself that, even in this life, thy enemies shall be daily diminished and their forces that assault thee continually weakened, and thyself by my grace and use of fighting, wonderfully strengthened; insomuch as that which at the first thou couldst scarcely scrape out with a file of iron, thou shalt come in time to drive away with a blast of wind.

15. Moreover, whensoever thou chancest to fall, take this for a general rule, though thou fallest never so often, and offendest never so greatly, yet presently without any delay come unto me lamenting thy fault, and bewail it with me, lying prostrate at my feet, and rise again with me, leaning thyself upon me; that is, repose thy confidence in my power, resolving firmly to amend, and never to offend in it again. I know man's weakness in general, I know also thine in particular, and how apt man is of his own frailty to fall, and how it proceedeth from the malice of the devil for a man to be unwilling to stand, or unwilling to rise again

after he is fallen. Which thing cannot only be by no means excused, but also receiveth, without my mercy, a heavier damnation. I require nothing of thee but a good will, and nothing is in my eyes more precious than the same.

16. Wherefore, if thou wantest force, ability, or time to do good works, be not dismayed, for thy good will doth fully content me. Retain ever within thyself a good will, for by it thou mayest satisfy for all thy defects, and repair all thy faults, although thou beest able to do nothing besides. When thou thinkest me farthest from thee, then am I nearest unto thee. Therefore, my daughter, as soon as thou shalt find that thou hast offended, condemn thyself, and presently running unto me, confess thyself guilty, and make complaint against thyself unto me. Thou canst not sooner be repentant than I have granted thee my pardon; neither canst thou sooner ask forgiveness than I have quite remitted and forgiven all.

17. Wherefore then, O my spouse, dost thou stay from returning unto me? Thy safety is not procured in flying from me, but in flying unto me. In whatsoever thou seest that thou hast most offended, where thou findest that thou hast oftenest fallen; to conclude, where thou perceivest that thou

hast most declined from virtue, there cry oftenest unto me, there sigh unto me with more often groans, and desire with all fervency at my hands both pardon for thy sins and the protection of my grace.

18. Be not wearied with temptations, but always resist them as much as thou canst; neither yield thyself as vanquished by them, nor as a prisoner unto them. As long as thou resistest thou art never overcome. For whatsoever thou feelest and art enforced to suffer—as long as thou sufferest it against thy will, and resisting it as I told thee before—I will never impute it to thee as a fault, because I require not an account at thy hands of that thou feelest, but of that to which thou consentest. To feel motions of sin is ingrafted, as it were, in thy flesh; but to consent unto it resteth in thy own choice. There may be a certain kind of violence offered to the flesh and senses, but the will can never be compelled.

19. There are two things in temptation: one, the matter whereunto thou art tempted, and that is sin and imperfections; these thou must never consent unto, neither yet yield thyself in any sort unto them, but resist them with all thy might. The other is, that labour and distress which thou dost endure in resisting them; and this thou must patiently abide and yield unto as long as it is my

pleasure that thou shalt be tempted. For thou oughtest not to resist me, but to subject thyself wholly unto my will, and to resist those motions which thou art stirred unto by the means of temptation, that thou mayest continue still in my favour, receive my grace, and be partaker of my consolation.

20. But I know what thou wilt say, for I am not ignorant of those things which thou dost suffer, and wherewith thy heart is afflicted. I will tell thee them, therefore, since thou art ashamed to tell them thyself, that by it thou mayest be the better assured to receive remedy and consolation for them at my hands. The temptation of thy flesh doth assault thee, not only every day, but every moment. To resist this continually is troublesome and grievous; and to escape it without fighting is impossible. To fight long and not to be wounded is, in thy judgement, not only hard but miraculous. He that is thy enemy is very familiar with thee; thou carriest him about with thee in every place; thou art not permitted to destroy him, but thou art enforced to nourish him. His weapons are many, his manner of fight divers, and his assaults very violent, as the fiery heats, the fervent motions, the delightful allurements, the terrible perturbations, the cruel onsets, the sweet pleasures of all kinds of lust and concupiscence, and many such

other which some men do feel raging in their flesh like certain furies of hell. Now the strong impressions and delectations of them being in a manner violent and joined with these fancies, are almost sufficient to vanquish all thy senses.

21. Moreover, the instability and inconstancy of some men's hearts is so great that even in the very moment wherein they prepare themselves to resist these temptations, they are presently, as it were, fallen beside themselves, and clean forgetting that which they had determined, they begin to think of that which they did refuse to think of before. Now, who amongst these dangers, sayest thou, can escape safe? Who can fly away from sin unwounded? Marry, a good and a humble will, for to it there can no violence be offered. For, whatsoever thou thinkest, chastity is not polluted with it, but with the consent of thy mind; that is, whatsoever thou feelest in thy flesh shall not be imputed to thee for sin if thy mind consent not thereunto; for whatsoever is sin must be voluntary, and as long as it is not voluntary, it is not sin.

22. Therefore, with how great temptations soever thou art oppressed—nay, though thy flesh do seem to be overwhelmed with them, and thy senses as prisoners unto them, yet whatsoever thou feelest delightful to thy

flesh, keep thy mind free, that is, thy reasonable will, and then nothing can hurt thee. Cry out with the detestation of thy soul against them, and with a voice that doth abhor them: *Fie, fie, I will not, I will not.* Turn unto me with all the force thou art able, and repeat often this short sentence: *O my God, help me; O merciful Jesus, I will not yield unto them; help me.*

23. Moreover, though most loathsome and horrible temptations do creep into thy mind, yet for all that be thou not dismayed; as they creeped in so let them creep out, and by that gate wherein they did enter let them depart, and let not them only out themselves, but carry out with them anything that is naught and unclean within thee, that they may leave thy house swept and cleansed. And this thou mayest do if thou wilt enter into a deep consideration to know thyself, and call upon me only with a firm confidence and with great humility, neither seeking to spare thyself, nor ceasing to persecute thine enemies. For it is a most present remedy against all inclinations, to remember, as soon as ever thou shalt find an evil inclination in thy mind, how thou art nothing and hast nothing of thyself but by my grace only, and how impossible it is for thee, with any ability of thine own, to resist these motions, and, therefore, presently to fly unto me with

all thy heart, and to seek aid and protection from my wounds which I suffered for thy sake, at the sight whereof the ancient enemy of mankind doth yet quake and tremble.

24. Believe me, my daughter, although thou be haunted as much as is possible for thee with carnal thoughts, sensual motions, violent cogitations and imaginations, and although thou feel in this behalf as much as may be devised, yet, as long as reason hath the upper hand, and doth gainsay them, and as long as thy reasonable and deliberate will doth not make choice of them, thou hast neither lost charity nor my grace. This distress which thou dost sustain and these straits whereinto thy heart is driven by the means of this conflict, may be a plain argument unto thee that thou hast not consented unto them, and so, consequently, a great comfort to thy mind. For if thou hadst consented unto them, that is, if thou hadst willingly felt those things which thou didst feel, if thou hadst willingly retained those cogitations which did enter into thy mind, thou shouldst not then have felt this distress, this combat and sharp conflict, but rather all peace and tranquillity in thy soul.

25. Receive a similitude, O my daughter, at my hands for thy comfort. If any man in

fight hand to hand be overcome, vanquished, bound, yea, and beaten, and although he be so straitly holden as he hath no ability to use his own limbs; yet, if he yield not himself as a prisoner and vanquished, but resisteth with as much force as he is able, and consenteth not to this his captivity, he can never be said to be conquered or overcome. In like manner, thou shalt never be judged of me to be overcome, whether thou be tempted of the flesh or the devil, except thou consent with thy mind, and ceasest to resist them. Thou must feel many things which thou oughtest not to consent unto, that is, which thou oughtest not to feel with thy good will, and with a certain delight.

26. But thou wilt say, it is very painful to be in continual fight; it is painful to renounce those things which thou covetest; it is painful not to think of those things wherein thou delightest; it is painful to persecute those things which thou lovest. O my daughter, thou dost consist of two parts, that is, of the flesh and of the spirit, and therefore thy desires are divers, and those things which delight the flesh are painful to the spirit. If it seem painful to the flesh to offer violence to itself, if it cannot hate itself, let the spirit reign, let the spirit have the royal sovereignty and imperial authority in thee, and she will not think it any pain to bring he enemy,

that is, the flesh, under her yoke and subjection. That which seemeth at the first heavy and almost intolerable, by continual use of fighting cometh to be light, and may well be endured; for the oftener that thou resistest thy enemy, thou art the stronger, and he the weaker. For dost thou not know that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and that the violent bear it away? Fight, therefore, manfully the oftener: and the more stoutly that thou dost it, the more easy shalt thou ever find it.

27. Remember also that, as the temptation shall end, so the fight shall not always continue, and that an eternal crown of glory, which is due to the conqueror, doth remain for thee. The sharper thy fight is, the more glorious thy crown of victory shall be. And, therefore, if thou overcomest, being tempted, thou shalt have a double reward; whereas, if thou hadst never been tempted, thou shouldst have received but a single. Moreover, the fiercer that thou art assaulted with the temptation of sin, the clearer shalt thou be purged from thy sins, if thou dost not consent unto it. And although in this conflict, especially when a heavy temptation doth furiously rage in thy flesh, there are many venial sins wont to be committed—which are given as light wounds to those that fight—yet, notwithstanding, that pain

which is endured by continuing still in fight and by resisting of mortal sins, doth on the contrary part take away all that pain which the venial sins do deserve.

28. Besides, that charity wherewith thou, fighting for my sake, dost avoid mortal wounds, and takest great pain in striving for virtue, doth not only heal thy lesser wounds, but also doth turn them to thy greater glory and reward, if thou shalt perfectly overcome these temptations, as the scars of a soldier's wounds which he received by fighting manfully in a most fierce battle are shown after the victory to his great honour; and the sharper the battle was, the greater is his glory. Fear not, therefore, my daughter, if thou art to fight long, or if thy temptation do continue forcible. If thou canst not prevail so far over thy sensuality as to make it in all things subject to thy reason, yet always resist it, never give it place, never grant it peace nor quietness. Thy battle against it, the conflict which thou dost endure in resisting of it, I will esteem as a victory and conquest over it.

29. For it is not only good to overcome evil, but with all thy might to resist evil; yea, it is sometimes more honourable and profitable for thee, by continuing in fight, to sustain longer the assaults of thine enemy and the labour of the conflict, than quickly

to have vanquished him, especially when it is done by my providence—which disposeth of all ever for the best towards those that love me—and not by thy own sloth and negligence. For I, who am a most upright and wise judge, do mark the travail and force of every one of my soldiers, and do more esteem in them their will than their ability; because to be able to conquer proceedeth from my gift, but to be willing to conquer resteth in their own choice; and yet, not that neither without my grace.

30. Wherefore, although my grace must of necessity assist you in both, yet it resteth more in your own choice to be willing to do well than to be able to do well; which I considering, O my daughter, do better allow in thee a will to do much than ability to perform much. It is also both meet, and agreeth with justice, that the longer thou fightest and the more pain thou takest, thou shouldst receive the larger reward; and not only a reward in the life to come, but even here, grace for grace; that is, for every good work which you do by my grace you shall receive a reward and some benefit or other by my gracious favour in this present world.

CHAPTER VII

HOW WE MUST FLY THE OCCASIONS OF TEMPTATION

TAKE a special care that thou art not an occasion of thine own temptation or destruction, in giving thine enemy, by thine own fault, opportunity to assault thee, and ability to overthrow thee. For avoiding whereof, fly provocations of temptation, restrain thy senses from wandering, shun the familiarity and private friendship both of men and women, whereby sometime the devil doth find an opportunity to tempt thee under the colour of devotion or spiritual love. For these things, for the most part, do leave behind them grievous temptations, of doubtful suspicions, perturbations, distractions, or else some scandals of violent love and affection.

2. If thy enemy which sought to take thy life stood at thy door, wouldst thou suffer him to come in? How quickly and carefully wouldst thou shut and bar the gates against him! Now, these carnal and vicious imaginations, cogitations, and affections do seek by all means to enter thy heart, and to destroy the life of thy soul: wilt thou then let them come in? Do not suffer them to enter;

drive not me away, but keep them out of thy house by force, and with a horrible detestation of them. Turn thy heart unto me, and, if thou feel anything in thy flesh, turn thy heart away from it.

3. Punish thy flesh when it waxeth proud or wanton with abstinence and temperance, both in meat and drink. Cut off all access of persons, all haunting of places, and all taking of any occasions whereby thou perceivest thyself to be tempted. And beware, above all things, that thou yield not thine own members so far to iniquity, as that the devil do make them instruments of iniquity, and so by thy negligence take opportunity to wound thee with thine own weapons. And, therefore, correct the pride of thy flesh with such strait discipline, and bridle it with so great modesty and bashfulness, that even for very fervent love of shamefacedness and chastity, thou mayest scarce presume to see or touch any naked part of thy hands or feet.

4. And for all unclean cogitations which shall chance to be still importunate upon thee, drive them out, as it were one nail with another, by some godly meditation and imprinting in thy mind some holy impression of my life and passion. For, to think of my wounds and passion doth ever yield, without all doubt, a continual and wonderful

increase of virtue. For if I have infused into herbs, stones and roots, rare virtues to expel many diseases of the body, how unspeakable and how effectual virtue have I given to my wounds and passion, as thou thinkest, for expelling of spiritual diseases, and both curing and sanctifying of the soul.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN SPIRITUAL TEMPTATIONS ARE TO BE CONQUERED

If filthy and unclean thoughts, as it often happeneth, do at some time enter thy mind against me and my saints, or else, that thou be tempted with blasphemy and rebellious cogitations, let it never henceforth trouble thee, nor yet make thee faint-hearted. Neither be thou perplexed in thy mind with thinking how to make thy confession of any such matter as long as thou dost not with advised and deliberate consent yield unto them. For they carry with them more grief than delight, and thou rather sufferest than doest those things, being for that time altogether in passion and nothing in action.

2. Wherefore, he that carrieth a pure mind need not either to fear them or confess

them. For although a godly mind may seem by this means a little polluted, yet is it not defiled by her own fault and negligence. And, therefore, such things as these, which procure great heaviness to a devout heart and my Spouse—because she is enforced to feel within herself, and to be turmoiled with such filthy imaginations and cogitations against me, as those which be the greatest sinners do abhor—are rather an affliction and purgation unto her than any defiling or pollution of her. For the devil, whilst he seeth thee withdrawn from all other things whatsoever and only to thirst after me, doth endeavour to trouble this quiet peace of thine and to hinder and to keep thee from being united unto me, by these fancies which seem both odious and horrible.

3. Wherefore the more holy that the day is, the more earnestly dost thou bend thyself to the exercise of divine actions, the more thou dost seek to lift up thy heart, and the more vehemently that thou dost strive to unite thyself wholly unto me, the more violently, wickedly, and importunately do these imaginations assault thee, being stirred up either by the devil or by some timorous fearfulness of thine own; because as soon as thy soul doth begin to abhor and fear a thing, she doth presently feel and find the same which she feareth or for which she is afraid.

For fear and faint-heartedness doth quickliest thrust into a man's mind that imagination which is feared. And the devil also doth raise these perturbations and motions within thy soul, that whilst thou art busied in seeking to resist them, thou mayest be withholden from feeling the sweet taste of my charity; or else, being too much dismayed with them, thou mayest be afraid, and not presume to approach me.

4. The devil doth this because he delighteth to entangle thy mind with scruples and perturbations, and by them to hinder the sabbath of thy quiet rest. But do not regard them, do not fear them, do not answer them, do not resist them, do not observe them, but go forward in thy godly devotion and holy exercise, as though thou felt nothing, and as though thy mind were troubled with nothing; and pass over all these filthy cogitations as the barking of a cur, or the hissing of a goose, to which a man will disdain to make an answer, and will not stay either to contend or strive with them, but only pass by them and laugh at them. In doing thus, thou shalt easily avoid and quickly forget them. But if thou seekest to resist them, to dispute with them, to fear them, to regard them, to hearken unto them and to remove them, thou shalt still more deeply imprint them in thy mind, and the more dangerously entangle

thyself, with great perturbation. For these temptations are not vanquished by fighting with them, but by contemning of them.

5. Take heed also, that no temptation overcome thee by importunity, and by making thee weary to resist it, for this is a usual practice of the devil to vex some with so long and troublesome a temptation, that he overcometh those by trying them with that wicked device of his, whom he could neither deceive by subtlety nor entice by pleasure. Wherefore thou hast need to be long-suffering, constant and patient; and as thou oughtest to detest those wicked cogitations which are thrown into thy mind by the craft of the devil, against my honour, and are brought in of purpose to seduce thee, so thou mayest in no sort either mislike or seek to shun that affliction which I send unto thee, nor those heavy and troublesome burthens which thou feelest by my will and providence laid upon thee; nor yet that pain which thou takest in any conflict, when thou strivest to resist vice and iniquity, but thou oughtest for my sake to bear them patiently, and without any grudging.

6. Of this also I am to warn thee, that if thou be tempted with any carnal vices, as gluttony and concupiscence, thou mayest more easily vanquish them by flying them, than by fighting with them. But on the

contrary part, all spiritual vices are ever overcome, not by lightly passing over them, but by staying with good consideration upon them, and doing the contrary of that to which they allure thee. For the temptation of pride is neither any whit diminished nor yet vanquished by flying all occasions that may any way move thee to humble thyself, that is, by flying all the means that may procure humility in thee, in hope by that course to abate the force and avoid the motions of that temptation. But if thou wilt overcome it, stay advisedly upon it, and enforce thyself to do those things that may humble thee.

7. Thou shalt after the same sort, overcome envy if, presently and violently, as it were in spite of her, thou dost those things from which she dissuadeth thee; that is, if thou speakest to thy brother, if thou seekest to do him service, if thou dost humble thyself unto him. In like manner also, thou shalt never conquer slothfulness by flying all travail, or by neglecting the divine honouring and serving of me, and by seeking to withdraw thyself, that thou mightest not be commanded to labour, and take pains; but by enforcing thyself with all thy might and by applying wholly of thy mind to practise and perform devout and virtuous exercises.

CHAPTER IX

HOW WE OUGHT TO TAKE HEED OF ENVY

BEWARE of envy as much as possibly thou canst, that by it thou be not brought to mislike of any man, to speak in derogation of him, to prefer thyself before him, to molest and vex him, and to be also thyself vexed—if he be preferred before thee—with his virtue, with his honour, with his commendation, or with his spiritual profit.

2. To overcome this temptation, be more courteous and lowly unto him, my Daughter, than to another; speak nothing of him thyself nor hear him spoken of in his absence; neither yet let anything proceed from thee in word, deed, or show that may seem to savour of envy, or to spring from that venomous root.

CHAPTER X

HOW WE MUST FLY SINGULARITY

SHOW not in thy conversation with others any sad or unquiet countenance, but a courteous kind of behaviour, lest thy conversation seem troublesome or unpleasant unto them.

2. Beware of being singular and using any particular fashion by thyself, different from the rest, in any unnecessary ceremony, act or show of devotion, when thou art in other men's company. And as for those points which are profitable for thy soul, which thy calling and Christian profession requireth at thy hands, and which are necessary either for obtaining of virtue or avoiding of sin, fear not to be singular in them; conform not thyself in those to other men's fancies if they be careless of their own salvation, but rather resolve for the benefit of thine own soul, the obtaining of virtue and the fulfilling of my good pleasure, constantly, humbly and patiently to bear all their derisions and persecutions for the same.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE HONOUR, REVERENCE AND WORSHIP WHICH WE OUGHT TO EXHIBIT UNTO THE MOTHER OF GOD

SALUTE my Mother often and zealously with thy fervent prayers, and honour her ever with all reverence and a principal devotion, by seeking diligently to imitate both her life and her virtue. For I gave her to this world as a perfect example of sanctity, innocency

and purity, as a singular patroness and most safe refuge for all my servants, and as a sanctuary of so great freedom to all those which are in misery and tribulation as no man might have cause to mislike it, no man might fear to take it, nor yet be in doubt to approach unto it.

2. And to that end I made her so meek, so virtuous, so merciful, so gentle and so gracious as she might despise no man, deny her aid to no man, but ever lay open her bosom of pity before all men, and not to suffer any man to depart from her sad or without consolation. I made her also gracious, amiable, worthy to be beloved, and after a wonderful sort, most sweet and delightful to those which otherwise were desperate and obstinate sinners, that she might be a meet bait for my hook to catch all souls, but specially such as could by no other means be taken. For those heinous sinners which break out of all other nets, and for whom I cannot find an apt course by any other way to draw them unto me, I use to catch by her means, that is, by the veneration of her and their devotion towards her, whom I make to taste most sweet in their hearts, and excite those which are hard-hearted towards me to perform good works unto her, that is, acts of veneration, confidence and invocation; and by this means I make them

vessels fitter and worthier to receive my grace, and greater illumination from me, until they attain to a more reformed, and, for the most part, a most holy course of life.

3. Recommend thyself daily, therefore, unto her protection, that by her help thou mayest receive greater grace and favour at my hands. For I committed unto her custody the whole treasure of my grace and mercy to be distributed and bestowed, when I recommended unto her all my sons, in the person of *John*, as her sons, but specially sinners, for whom I did at that present suffer. This she knoweth very well, and therefore is so careful and diligent to discharge the office she received from me, as she suffereth none of those, as far as lieth in her power, which were committed unto her, and principally such as call upon her, to perish, but preferreth them unto me, both with her earnest prayers and by all the other means she is able, that they may be reconciled unto me and received again into my favour.

4. Dost thou think then, my Daughter, that I could have chosen any more fit and more meet for this business? Could I have found any that had been so apt and able every way to have discharged this office? Dost thou think that such as are sorrowful, desolate and overwhelmed with their sins will desire any other mediator for them unto

me, which may sue more faithfully in their behalf, and be more graciously inclined to receive them, and more ready to bring them unto me than this woman, this most humble, most pitiful, most meek and most loving Virgin, abounding with all sweetness and mercy, being most mighty of herself to relieve sinners, and most acceptable unto me because she is my mother, yea, even his mother whose wrath is to be pacified and appeased towards them?

5. Alas, how far do they err, how great a burthen of wilful obstinacy and perdition do they heap upon their own backs who do mutter and murmur against this holy Virgin who hath the custody and bestowing of my graces, and will not acknowledge her for an advocate unto me, as I am to my Father? Dost thou think that they can by any means throw themselves more headlong into the bottomless pit of hell, than by making her their enemy—for whose sake I have so often spared the world, and so often forborne to pour my wrath upon men—that when there is none to be a mediator for them or to withhold my hand, which is ready bent to punish them, I may without any let or impediment, strike them as often and as much as I will? But what greater pain or punishment can I lay upon these men than not to chasten them temporally here as

children, but to deliver them over as my enemies into a reprobate sense, that they being blind may not see into what danger they run, until they find themselves drowned in perpetual darkness, and overwhelmed with eternal destruction?

6. I do use these exhortations unto thee as unto my Spouse, of mere love and good-will, that being instructed by my spirit thou mayest not decline either in this or in any other matter whatsoever, be it never so small, from the decrees and resolution of doctrine which my holy Catholic Church hath determined and resolved upon; nor yet suffer thyself to be deceived by that wicked and malignant spirit of theirs which pretend in show to be followers of the Gospel, and are in truth nothing less.

CHAPTER XII

OF SENSIBLE DEVOTION

If thou findest not sensible devotion, be not therefore grieved nor dejected in thy soul, but do with a stout and constant mind—although thou feelest it dry and barren—whatsoever thou knowest to be for my honour, and as much as thou art able to perform in that behalf. There are many

which, shedding tears, do seem to have some spiritual devotion and sweet taste in their soul, and yet their life is never a whit the holier, nor themselves at that time free from mortal sin, but it proceedeth from a certain tenderness of their heart, as is often seen in women, and also in men that are by nature passionate and full of compassion. Have no confidence, therefore, in that devotion which doth not better and amend thy life.

2. Thou shalt see some weep often and be sorrowful for the death of a valiant captain whose worthy and famous acts they have only read, though he were a Gentile or a Pagan. They will weep also sometimes if they read of a heavy parting or a pitiful death of two constant lovers. What wonder is it, then, if they weep at my most holy and devout service, by seeing many pathetical things done in the worshipping of me, or by taking compassion of those things which I did suffer for them, or by rejoicing at that honour which is done unto me; and yet, these tears proceed from a natural passion of their heart, without any virtuous intention or profitable fruit to their souls, as long as they do not my will and fulfil my commandment. If, therefore, thou findest thy heart hardened and barren, without such devotion, endeavour thou to have another kind of

devotion which is a true, perfect and ready will, with a determined resolution, to do all those things which may honour and please me.

3. Moreover, for the want of the other, that is, sensible devotion, seek out the true cause and reason, lest perhaps thou hast lost that sweet taste in thy soul by some dissolute motion, by lightness, by inordinate love, or unmeasurable joy, or lest thou hast been too much busied with earthly cogitations, or else, lest thou hast polluted thy soul with the spots of pride, or hast sought to please thine own fancy, or for some such other vice and offence. In which case thou oughtest to be rather grieved for the cause of this barrenness of thy soul, that is, thou oughtest to be more sorry for the fault which thou hast committed, than for the devotion which thou hast lost. Endeavour to cleave unto me with a good and pure will, severed from earthly affections and with a naked and simple understanding, far from conceiving of needless or unprofitable matters, and omit to do no good thing that either thou wert accustomed to use before, or that may tend to my honour, but remain patient with renouncing of thine own appetite, and expect my pleasure with resigning of thyself wholly unto the same.

4. And although somewhat, at some times, do suddenly break out of thy sensual dis-

position and outward man, or remain boiling in thy mind, which is not convenient for thy profession; or else, if thou sufferest any distress, if thou be oppressed with the temptations of heaviness in thy soul, resisting or murmuring, take special care that at the least, thy inward and reasonable man, being subject unto me, continue settled in all tranquillity, in loving of my commandments, and in labouring to fulfil them.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW WE MUST PREPARE OURSELVES WHEN WE COME TO RECEIVE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

To speak somewhat, by the way, of that preparation which thou oughtest to make when thou comest to receive the Blessed Sacrament of my precious body, I am first to advertise thee that shouldst not be discouraged although thou dost not sensibly feel devotion in thee, yea, although thou findest thyself troubled with horrible temptations, and assaulted with some odious imaginations, which do invade thy mind. For this sensible devotion of thy soul is not so necessary, but rather, that reasonable devotion of thy will whereby thou dost believe well of my Sacrament, and whereby,

notwithstanding these blasphemous thoughts which do assail and almost overwhelm thee, thou mayest be moved to do all honour and reverence to my Sacrament, although it be against thine appetite, contrary to thy liking, and repugnant to the sense or opinion of thine own heart.

2. And lastly, that thou mayest by this enforcing of thyself against thy carnal desire, find thy will ready and prepared with all obedience to honour me, to give me thanks, to resign thyself wholly unto me, and to subject thy mind so far to my liking as that it may be best contented with that which agreeth most with my pleasure. If thou hast this devotion, my Daughter, which thy reasonable will may easily command and procure in thee, that is, if thou be sorry that thou hast ever offended me and determined never to offend me again, but to endeavour as much as possibly thou canst in all things to obey my will, thou mayest come boldly unto this Sacrament, thou mayest enter securely into my presence; for neither reasonable nor sensible devotion, neither virtue, nor yet my grace is obtained by flying from me, but by approaching near unto me.

3. Therefore, the more sadder and the more desolate that thou findest thyself, yea, although it be at that time when thou art going to confession, or to receive my blessed

body, the more earnestly and vehemently excite and enforce thyself to proceed in thy good purpose, that thou mayest be made stronger in grace, more constant in goodness, and more fervent in love towards me. Provided always, that thou carriest with thee a pure intention and a good will, as I said before.

4. Neither let it trouble thee if, even in coming to receive this Blessed Sacrament, there doth enter some horror and terror into thy soul, or if thou be scarce able presently to take and swallow the blessed host, or if thou find some gallish kind of bitterness in thy taste, for these are not certain signs that thou camest unworthily to it; but thou hast rather cause to mistrust that fear, faint-heartedness and continual custom of trembling, have procured this imagination in thee, which is strongest of all in women, and maketh thee to think that thou feelest those things indeed which either thou dreadest to feel hereafter, or thou dost imagine that thou feelest at that present. But if thou couldst clean remove this faint-heartedness and fearful imagination of thine, thou shouldst with it also clean expel this difficulty and distress which thou findest in thy mind. For albeit I could deliver thee from all these perturbations, yet do I permit some such distresses as these to assault thee and other

of my servants, because I know it is the best mean either to keep all of you humble, or, by humbling of you, to deliver you from the sin of pride which is in women most usual.

5. Be therefore stout, and carry a resolute mind, that, shaking off all womanish fear or faint-heartedness, and purging it from those filthy cogitations which do enter into thee, by contemning of them and their persuasions, thou mayest with a quiet mind and a pure conscience, wholly dedicated to my service, desire me, seek me and receive me in the Blessed Sacrament, which am and will always remain unto thee, if the fault be not with thyself, a most gracious lover, a most gentle protector, a most merciful Redeemer, a most loving preserver, and a most faithful Saviour. But because thou mayest be inflamed with a greater reverence, love and desire towards this Blessed Sacrament, I assure thee that, without all doubt, my body is there sacramentally delivered unto thee, to be received under the form of bread.

6. Wherefore, seeing it is the same body which I carry now glorified in heaven; seeing it is no other, nor any like unto it, but even the very same; and seeing I carry not a body which is dead nor without blood, it followeth of necessity that, together in the same body there must be also contained my soul, my blood, my graces and my virtues; to all which

since the Word is united, that is one Person of the Trinity, the two other Persons cannot be divided but are inseparably united, it must also follow that the whole Trinity is present in this Sacrament, as truly and as verily as they are in heaven, though in another kind, that is, under a sacramental form. The same opinion thou must in like sort have of the Chalice, the New Testament in my blood. Consider, therefore, now with thyself with how great willingness and desire thou oughtest to come unto this Sacrament, seeing that thou hast in it true salvation and that thou hast me really and perfectly there who am the author of all thy happiness.

7. And because I would not have thee drawn from it with too much timorousness of thy conscience, or with too great a fear of the reverence and majesty thereof, I have commanded thee to come unto it and to receive it for a commemoration of me, assuring thee that my delight is to be with the children of men, and that I do much rejoice when I may do any of you good, and to knock at the gate of your hearts, that being entered in, I may sup with you, and both feed and refresh your hungry spirits with myself. And to what other end do I all these things, but only to procure to have a hope and confidence in me and not to withdraw yourselves from so profitable and

necessary a Sacrament, or to deprive your souls of that infinite and inestimable fruit which you shall receive thereby, for fear of being made unworthy by these temptations which you feel against your will, and therefore are not by them polluted with any sin.

CHAPTER XIV

OF DISCRETION

As humility must be the guide of all thy exercises, so let discretion rule and moderate them lest they hurt thee or make thee unable to do thy duty, or lest the greater benefits and better exercises of thy soul be hindered by the outward exercises of thy body which are not so good nor so profitable, and, to conclude, lest by exercising any virtuous act thou dost somewhat offend in breach of charity.

2. Have consideration also of the infirmity of thy body, and take care that thou consume not thy strength if thou be weak, and govern all thy intents, studies and exercises by the direction of such as fear me or are thy superiors, leaving or lessening them, increasing or moderating them according to their will and counsel. Wherefore, if thy superior, who hath the charge of thy soul as being my

deputy, and discharging of that office in my stead towards thee, forbid thee to fast or any other thing that is not in itself sin, obey him, believing that he, knowing thy ability every way, doth advise and command thee to that which may be fittest and most necessary for thy salvation.

3. And therefore, my Daughter, if thou art bidden to eat eight times in a day, thou shalt not in obeying it offend me. Nevertheless, retain still a will to fast when thou hast liberty to use thine own discretion. But if for obedience' sake thou eat, thou shalt by eating receive of me a double reward, whereas otherwise, by fasting thou shouldst have had but only a single. For thy good will to fast and the fruit of thy good will is not lost if thou eatest to show only thy obedience; but being done for obedience' sake it is, together with obedience, crowned and rewarded in thee. In like sort it is in all other things which thou desirest of thine own will to do, and art enforced to omit only to show thy obedience.

4. Seek daily, desire earnestly, study continually to set forth and advance my glory as much as thou art able, and whereso-ever thou canst, and to fulfil my will both in thyself and in all others. Neglect to do no good work that thou hast ability to perform, but go forward in goodness every day,

and strive always to increase in virtue; but neither glory nor rejoice in thyself, for all the travail, study and exercise which thou usest in doing of good works; neither be thou comforted with it, as though thou hadst anything, wert anything, or able to do anything of thyself, but fix thine eyes ever upon thine own baseness and imbecility, remembering that thou art merely nothing, but of my grace, and therefore ascribe all the good thou dost to me only.

5. There be some which are not contented with that correction of their flesh which I do lay upon them, but do torment their bodies with indiscreet abstinence and immoderate afflictions, and make themselves by that means not only unapt and unable to obey me, to follow my steps, and to endure the conflicts of this spiritual battle, but also, being tired and consumed in their natural strength by this indiscreet dealing, are enforced to leave those exercises which they were wont to use before and to take more care of their flesh than is requisite or convenient, for repairing of that which was decayed by their own folly. Wherefore, moderate thou thy exercises and labours according to the proportion of thy force and ability, lest thou dost surcharge and overthrow thyself; and fail not by good means to nourish thy body. It is my will that thou

shouldst comfort nature and repair from time to time thine infirmity not with an extraordinary care or delight, but for the refreshing of nature, as I said before.

6. And for the better enabling of thy body to do me service, to yield thyself a fit instrument of my grace, to fulfil my will, to follow my commandments and to do those works which are most acceptable in my sight, being always as ready, if it be my pleasure, to suffer poverty as to enjoy riches, and as willing to be sick as to be whole. But when thou shalt not be compelled by discretion to nourish thy body for infirmity of nature, take heed lest by impatience or want of devotion or of an insatiable desire to please thine own appetite, thou seekest evasions to escape, and deliver thyself from those adversities or troubles which I send thee. But remember to receive such crosses as are of my sending gladly; sustain them patiently, complain of them to nobody, bear them with long-suffering, and stay with all meekness, expecting of my pleasure.

7. Suffer me to deal with thee as I think fit, that by that tribulation which falleth upon thee, my grace may work some good effect in thee. This is much better and more profitable for thee than that which of thine own head thou layest upon thyself. For I would have thee to be fully persuaded,

my Daughter, that I never permit thee to suffer any tribulation but that it is for thy good and for the purging and repairing of thy soul, which is weakened or impaired by sin, if thou wouldst believe me, by bearing it with silence, and wait my pleasure by patient suffering thereof. For I will come at the last, who am never absent from thee, but am always ready in all places to assist thee.

8. Beware, therefore, that thou dost not despise those afflictions which I do send and lay upon thee, for I will guide thee in them. Rely upon me, trusting in my providence and love towards thee and not in thine own will and ability. Be content that I and other men do afflict thee: in the meantime, do not thou persecute thy flesh but thy faults, and endure with patience whatsoever shall happen unto thee.

CHAPTER XV

HOW WE OUGHT IN ALL THINGS TO CONFORM OURSELVES UNTO CHRIST

A FAITHFUL spouse ought to be so loving to her husband as she should desire with all her heart ever to be with him, never without him and at no time from him. She should wish to conform herself in all things unto her husband's mind, and be glad when she

were in anything like unto him. After the same manner thou must behave thyself. Consider my life, my actions and my virtues, whereby thou mayest learn what I love and what doth please me in thee.

2. Now, if thou wilt be a faithful spouse, O soul, thou oughtest to desire nothing so much as to please me and to frame thyself in all things agreeable to my will. Whereso-ever, therefore, that I go, desire to accom-pany me; whatsoever I do, study to imitate me; whatsoever I suffer, be ready to suffer with me; and if by any occasion thou feelest tribulation, rejoice in it, because by it thou art made like unto me.

3. Consider and recount with thyself every one of my virtues, or at the least the principal, whereby thou mayest stir up a desire in thy mind to imitate and follow me. It shall be an easier labour for thee then, to cut off, mortify, and rase out all those things which are contrary and unlike to my course of life; that is, thy vices, thy wicked inclina-tions and corrupt affections. And, as I said before, thou shalt attain to such a habit of well-doing in time, by a studious will, a watchful care and continual travail, that thou mayest come hereafter to drive away that, as it were with one blast of wind, which thou canst now scarce scrape away with a file of iron.

CHAPTER XVI

OF POVERTY

BEHOLD therefore, first, my poverty, who when I was rich, made myself poor for thy sake; how I came to mine own and mine did not receive me; how I was very poor, and as a stranger and sojourner in a foreign land; how my mother being lodged in an inn, as a guest in a strange place, I was born in a stable before the mouths of beasts, which by the heat of their breath might defend me from the bitter cold, being laid upon hay in a manger; how I was redeemed with the sacrifice of poor innocents; how, being an infant, I was driven into banishment, brought up by the labour of my mother and fed by alms at other folks' cost, having neither house nor lodging of mine own; how I watched often in the mountains; how I was despoiled of all my garments at the time of my passion and died naked upon the Cross, being in so great want of all things as I could not have a drop of water in my most extreme thirst to refresh my dried tongue. Lastly, how, after my death, I was buried in the grave that was made for another.

2. Moreover, how often dost thou think that I suffered in the whole course of my

life, hunger, cold, thirst and other vexations of my body? And as for corporal consolation —which most men do think very necessary— I refused and utterly rejected it, patiently enduring penury and poverty in all things. But thou, when thou hast everything ready at hand that thou canst desire, thou dost flatter thyself and thinkest that thou livest in poverty, and dost repine if thou canst not have every other thing that thou wantest, although it be merely superfluous and more to please thy envious mind than to serve thy necessary use.

3. Look, therefore, upon my poverty and leave to be sad, and cease to be offended if thou seest any man preferred before thee or endowed with greater abundance than thyself. Why art thou not rather grieved, like a good emulatress, if thou see any poorer than thyself, as St Francis was? If thou perceivest any man—which opinion thou oughtest to carry of all men—more agreeable to my life and poverty than thyself, this should be a good kind of emulation, not to be grieved with other men's happiness, or for that they are better than thou art, but to be heartily sorry because thou art not good thyself, and that it proceedeth of thine own fault and negligence.

4. Rejoice, therefore, and receive it for a special token of my grace, for an exceeding

benefit, if I make thee more agreeable to myself than other men, by sending thee some grievous sickness, some extreme poverty, misery, misfortune, or contempt in this world. And if thou wantest necessary things, rejoice; if they are taken away, be glad, and complain of it to no man, but embrace with me the cross of poverty, being quiet and contented in thy mind, using silence and utterly renouncing of thine own self. What doth it profit thee, my Daughter, if thou hast for my sake forsaken the world, her riches, her glory, and the comfort of thy friends, and art now troubled about a thing not worth a straw, or hast not yet abandoned all love for such vanities as are of no value, but art ready to fight, to be vexed and to contend, either for desire to attain them, or for fear to lose them, and art not afraid in this behalf to break peace and charity with thy neighbour?

5. Determine, therefore, now, and make a firm resolution from the bottom of thy heart, to contemn all things for the love of me, and be unwilling to possess anything but even such as of necessity thou art enforced to use, delighting in all poverty, contempt, and penury, that thou mayest be worthy to enjoy me, who, as I am better for thee than a thousand worlds, so ought I to be more esteemed and more dearly beloved of thee

than all earthly things whatsoever. Why stayest thou, my Daughter? Be encouraged with my example, be inflamed with my love, and seek earnestly in everything that appertaineth to thyself, to live in all want and poverty.

6. Moreover, think other men worthy of my consolation because they be my faithful servants, being far better than thyself and not so unthankful as thou art. And, therefore, being moved with charity, and as it were enforced with compassion, suffer no man to want anything that thou mayest supply, but help all men with thy travail, thy service, thy friendship, and by all the other means that are within the compass of thine ability. Whatsoever thou hast, think it to be other men's, that neither thou mayest love it when thou possessest it, nor be grieved when thou losest it. Whatsoever thou dost enjoy, think it is given thee for other men's use, and to serve their necessity.

CHAPTER XVII

OF HUMILITY

DETEST and abhor with all thy heart the honour, glory and favour of men, with all other flatteries and enticements of this

deceitful world. Think no otherwise of thyself, but as a proud man, unthankful to me, spiteful against me, and therefore, if I should reward thee according to thy deserts, worthy to be hated of all creatures as one unworthy to be borne by the earth, to receive breath by the air, or to be nourished and served by any of my creatures. Wherefore, ask always at my hands mercy and grace, not relying upon any work or merit of thine own, but trusting altogether in that only work of redemption which I finished for thee, and that unspeakable mercy which I showed towards thee. Desire of me with tears and sighs, perfect humility, that by it thou mayest delight to lie hidden and unknown, to be contemned, and had in no estimation.

2. Endeavour, as much as thou canst, to love those things which are most vile, and show greatest humility. Choose, likewise, both to do and to have those things which are most abject and which other men do most despise, thinking thyself more base and less worthy than those things that are most vile. Seek not to set forth in thyself anything that may savour of estimation or glory, or that may show, as it were, any singular gift in thee, except thou be enforced to it by necessity, or of mere charity, for the glory of God. Glory in nothing, neither yet boast thyself

of anything that is in thee. And if any man do offend or contemn thee, take heed thou be not angry with him for it, neither use him with worse countenance in show, nor bear him less good-will in thy heart. But rather marvel that every creature doth not persecute thee, to be revenged of the injury thou dost to me that am Creator both of thee and all them, and whom, notwithstanding, thou art nothing at all afraid to offend.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW HUMILITY IS TO BE OBTAINED

To obtain humility, consider and behold my majesty, my omnipotency, my wisdom and my goodness who only am immortal, only infinite passing all measure, without all limitation or circumscription, unspeakable, incomprehensible, from whom all creatures receive their being, and who am able with a beck both to bring all creatures and the whole world unto nothing, and again presently to restore all things to their former course and order. Therefore, seeing I am every way of so great power, you may easily perceive that I created you which are reasonable creatures, according to mine own image, not for necessity or for any need that I had of

you, but of my charity and goodness towards you, as persons upon whom I meant to bestow my benefits, and with whom I would impart my felicity.

2. From which grace, since you fell by sin, whereby you made yourselves not only unworthy of eternal life, but justly deserved eternal fire, I, being incarnate for your sakes, suffered three-and-thirty years' hunger, thirst, cold, heat, miseries, labours, persecutions, contempts, reproaches, stripes, blows, wounds, griefs, torments, and lastly the Cross and death itself, that I might deliver you from eternal death which you had incurred by your own deserts. I lived, my Daughter, in the world not as a God, not as a mighty person nor in a glorious show, but as the poorest, vilest, basest and most contemptible of all others, being subject to many torments and sundry reproaches, until at the last, I was slain with a most shameful and ignominious death, which the world did think I had justly deserved; for they judged both my life and doctrine to be so detestable, as they thought it fit to root them both out of all men's memory, and to make them end with my death, whereat a great multitude of people being present, did triumph and rejoice.

3. Yet went I as gladly to suffer it as the hart doth to the fountains of water; nay,

being made drunk with my love towards thee, I ran unto it and was never well until I had endured it. I spared not myself, neither fled I any labour, grief, pain or torment whatsoever. I refused to do nothing that might be for thy profit; thou wert so dear and precious in my sight, that I did even long with a desire to deliver myself for thy sake to be wounded in all parts with sundry kinds of torments, and for thy sake also, at the last, to end my life with a shameful death. Moreover, because I did vehemently thirst after thy salvation, I desired to shed all my blood for thee, which I did in such plentiful sort, as I left no one drop thereof remaining within my body.

4. But how dost thou, O my Daughter, requite me now for all this? What dost thou render again unto me in recompense of so great charity? Is it not even thou which, being unthankful to me so many years, didst despise myself, didst not regard my words, didst loathe my service and didst transgress my commandments? And yet showing all reproach towards me, being most unclean and vile in my sight; being altogether polluted with so many filthy abominations, thou dost banish me from thee, thou dost reject my inspirations, thou committest fornication with my creatures, thou abusest my gifts. Why dost thou still contemn and

forsake me, notwithstanding that I delivered thee out of most heinous sins and from eternal damnation itself, wherein thou hadst justly lain burning many years since, if my mercy had not prevented thee?

5. To be short, why wilt thou despise me seeing I have so often preserved thee from committing of many offences, and also raised thee out of the bottomless gulf of sin and wickedness? What, dost thou not yet at length consider that thou art vile, miserable and merely nothing, but by my grace? And how then darest thou lift up thy face to behold me, whom thou hast so often offended, so long time despised, so sundry ways contemned? I speak these things, my Daughter, to the end that thou shouldst know thyself.

6. Consider how vile and filthy thou art in thy body, how much polluted in thy soul and how impure in thy heart. And lastly, remember how unclean thou hast altogether made thyself with wicked works, with filthy cogitations, with corrupt and impure affections, and yet, nevertheless, how I still forbear to punish thee; nay, notwithstanding all this, how I declare my love towards thee, with pouring my benefits daily upon thee? But how long must I do this? Till what time must I forbear with thee? When wilt thou come to know thyself? How long

wilt thou stay to return unto me? Why dost thou not humble thyself under my yoke? Dost thou not see that I am not longer able to withhold my mercies from thee? Dost thou not perceive how I have called thee, in what place I have planted thee? Where are thy fruits? Dost thou not know how I wink at all thine iniquities, all thine abominations, all thine unthankfulness?

7. Yet I speak not these things, O my Daughter, to upbraid thee with those benefits which I have heaped upon thee, but, as it were, languishing with love of thee, and, as it were, seeming to stand in need of thee, though, indeed, I stand in need of nothing: yea, being, as it were, not able to live without thee, I do invite thee to love me again for that unspeakable goodness and charity which I have showed towards thee, that by loving me thou mayest perfectly see what I am, and what thou art, how much I have done for thee, and how injurious on the contrary part thou hast showed thyself unto me for the same.

8. Moreover, consider how many and innumerable souls are in hell at this day, and how thou hast been far more wicked than they, and more justly deserved that room, if thou hadst not been withholden from it by my grace. Imagine, likewise, that if they had received as much grace from me

as thou hast done, they would have showed themselves much more thankful unto me than thou hast been. If thou considerest all these things, that is, my majesty and thine own baseness, how proud thou art in thy baseness, and how humble I was in my majesty; how far for thy sake I abased myself to all poverty and contempt, it would not seem so great a matter to thee to humble thyself.

9. If, I say, thou wouldst rightly ponder with thyself, in how much poverty, in how abject estate, and in how great contempt, I, being so mighty, so rich, of so high dignity —that is, exceeding all measure in majesty, and infinite in goodness, and incomprehensible in them both—was content to serve thee, so base, and so vile a creature, scarce worthy the name of man—yea, and did it with so great charity, fidelity and desire—there would, by the impression of these thoughts, be bred in thy heart so great an obedience towards me, so great a reverence of me, and so great a desire to serve and adore my majesty, as can neither be expressed in words nor conceived in thought. It would procure, moreover, in thee, an insatiable desire and most burning thirst to honour me, to worship me, to exalt me and to contemn, humble and despise thyself, and, for the love of me, to throw thyself under the

feet of all my creatures, and, besides, patiently to endure reproaches, contempt and injury, at all their hands.

10. For though thou dost humble thyself never so far, though thou bearest never so much, yet thou shouldst think that thou hadst endured nothing in respect of the thirst and desire thou feelest in thine own mind to abase thyself and exalt me; insomuch that thou shouldst most love those which did seek most to oppress and despise thee, because they did serve, in this behalf, to satisfy thine earnest desire and thy humility, when they thought so much to humble and abase thee. If thou feelest not, my Daughter, these things as yet in thyself, acknowledge how unthankful thou art, and how far from true humility, which is a sincere and most lowly submission of thy heart in the sight of my divine majesty. After which followeth ever a contempt of thine own self, and a will likewise not only to be despised of others, but even by them to be acknowledged most vile.

11. I exhort thee once again, my Daughter, to look into my humility, and to take example by it how thou shouldst humble thyself. See how the world despised my life and doctrine, how they did falsely accuse and utterly reject me, how they backbited me in all their speeches, how great reproaches,

scorns, contempts, and derisions I suffered, even as a reprobate of most vile persons, and for most vile and unthankful creatures. And being thus mocked and made most abject as a scorn of all men, yet I despised no man, neither did I excuse myself, nor in any way sought in speech to resist or reprove them. Recount also with thyself, O unthankful creature, which art worthy to be despised, thine own obstinacy, negligence, sins, ingratitude, inconstancy, vileness, and, lastly, how thou art nothing of thyself, but by my grace only. Bewail, lament and excuse thyself of all these before me with continual tears. Whatsoever shall happen unto thee, turn it to thine own benefit, and use it as a mean to make thee humble. Take heed that thou takest not pleasure in thyself, but rather wonder how thou canst please or delight any other, if they did rightly know thee. Ever fix the eyes of thy heart upon the consideration of thine own weakness and disability in all respects.

12. Consider how thou art nothing and what thou oughtest to be and art not. Likewise what thou hast not and how unable thou art to do any good; how many things thou wantest; and, to be short, how far thou art from true and perfect charity, and from the perfection of a holy man's life. Call to mind also, how unlike and how little agreeable

thou art unto me, and remember that merely thou hast no good thing at all of thyself, but receivest all good things from me only, without any other mean whatsoever. Moreover, make account that thou hast of thyself these things, and no other at all, that is, an apt inclination to sin, to offend, to rebel, to stand in need of all good things, to be in necessity and misery, and by thine own fault both to lose and overthrow all those blessings and graces which I bestow upon thee.

13. For it is most certain, that if I should leave the nature of man to her own liberty and to do that whereunto she is most inclined, she would do no good at all, but decline every day from worse to worse, seeing she runneth so vehemently headlong now to commit wickedness, notwithstanding that I do so earnestly forbid her and, in a manner, violently withhold her. For the nature of man is nothing, of herself, and laboureth after that which is nothing. If thou didst continually meditate upon this, it would help thee very much for procuring of humility.

14. There must be also, notwithstanding, joined unto this another kind of humiliation for thy hidden and unknown imperfections, which for the most part are very grievous, although thou, being purblind, dost not perceive them. Fall, therefore, prostrate for these before the feet of my mercy and

bewail from thy heart thy incurable aptness and infirmity to commit sin, neither think ever otherwise of thyself than of one that is guilty of many faults, blind in many things, and most unthankful of all creatures.

CHAPTER XIX

HOW WE OUGHT NOT TO CARE FOR MEN'S JUDGEMENTS

TROUBLE not thy mind with imagining what men think of thee nor what censure they give of thee, neither yet fear their judgement, so long as thou dost not wittingly, as far as lieth in thy power, give them any scandal or occasion justly to reprehend or backbite thee. For thou art neither the better if they commend thee, nor the worse if they dispraise thee. But thou art in truth as I account thee, and as thou showest to be in my sight. Therefore, let not the commendation of any other rejoice thee, nor yet their dispraises grieve thee. For what dost thou gain by the commendation of others? Nothing, truly; but it doth rather many times greatly hurt thee, because it deceiveth thee and puffeth thee up with pride and vanity. And, on the contrary part, what can the contempt, reprehension, abasing, backbiting,

condemnation and persecution of men hurt thee? Truly, nothing at all; but rather they profit thee much, for they bring thee to know thyself, and help thee not a little to obtain humility of life and amendment of thy manners. For by it thou shalt be made more wary and wise in thy conversation with men, and not to trust in them, but to put all thy confidence in me.

2. The judgement of men, therefore, is not much to be cared for, whether they speak good or evil of thee. Let them think what they will; in the meantime lift thou up thy heart unto me, and if by searching every secret corner of thy heart, thou findest nothing in it that may offend me, fear nothing; but if by this examination thou findest somewhat wherein thou hast offended me, bewail thy fault, not because men do despise thee, for thou oughtest then justly both to suffer and desire that, but because thou hast offended me, and also given other men by thine example occasion to sin. But if anything be commended or dispraised in thee which is not sin, be not otherwise or more moved therewith than if some other man were commended or dispraised.

3. If men praise thee, ascribe it to their error and good-will towards thee; if they reprove thee or condemn thee, marvel not at it. For what marvel is it if men reprove,

despise and condemn thy life, seeing they also reproved my life and condemned all my doctrine, which was most innocent, void of all spot, and which could by no means be justly reprehended. Rejoice rather that thou art come to walk in those steps which I had trodden before, that is, of being humbled and accounted as a castaway of all men, and be glad that thou sufferest these persecutions of men. Let others imagine mischief against thee, I will turn their mischief to thy benefit; only endure thou all patiently, and be silent.

4. Study in all things to please me, and not men; and yet if thou chancest to please men, think that they are deceived in their opinion of thee, because they know thee not as well as I do, but do judge thee through their own simplicity, according to that appearance of goodness which they see in thy outward show. But if thou dost displease them, impute it to thine own deserts, and let it make thee more humble; for if they do despise thee for so little faults as they are able to see in thee, what would they do if they saw as perfectly as I all thy sins and offences? Delight, therefore, to be accounted vile and contemptible, and though thou be despised never so much, yet think that thou deservest to be a great deal more despised than thou art.

5. Thou oughtest to account thyself most miserable, most unworthy, most unthankful, and most needing of my grace and mercy, of all other creatures; remembering always, that of thyself thou art merely nothing, and that all thy works which are without me, neither savour anything of virtue nor yet are anything worth. Whosoever is most wicked, think him better and more worthy of heaven than thyself. Believe that other men do merit, and think that thou art tolerated here by my mercy only Presume not, therefore, in these respects, to compare thyself with any man, but imagine that thou hast offended me more than all men, and that thou art more vile and unthankful to me than any creature that liveth, because whatsoever is of thyself, either is nothing at all, or else is sin. Wherefore, to extol or magnify thyself, by the mean of those gifts which thou hast wholly received from me is intolerable, and a point of most arrogant pride. For the preventing whereof, and for thy greater profit, I do often withdraw from thee my sensible blessings, because thou knowest not how to use them, but abusest them, in turning them only to the magnifying of thyself, whereas in truth thou oughtest to challenge or ascribe nothing to thyself, but wholly attribute all unto me.

6. Take heed, therefore, that in the petitions which thou makest unto me thou hast

no respect to thyself, but to me only, lest thou show thyself unthankful towards me by pride, or detestable in my sight by thine own negligence. Remember how thou art nothing of thyself, how quickly thou art vanquished when I do not protect thee; and consider how thou art not able to endure the smallest adversity, or overcome the weakest temptation, when I fight not for thee. For of thine own ability thou hast no power in the world, but only to corrupt and pollute what good thing soever I bestow upon thee.

7. Thou art too apt, my Daughter, to dispraise other men, which is a token, without doubt, of great arrogancy, as though thou wert worthy to be preferred before those which thou so discommendest, because thou perhaps wantest that vice whereof thou accusest them, and yet art subject to many other. If thou wert not blind, thou mightest perceive that thou deservest not, by this kind of dealing, in any sort to be preferred before them, but rather thine own tongue maketh thee more detestable than they, because it discovereth openly thine arrogancy or envy. My friends are wont to reproach and accuse themselves of their own vices, and not to find fault with others, for they suspect both their works and themselves, neither will they trust themselves in anything, because they

have been by that mean so often deceived. For they fear always that they seek not me with such sincerity as they ought. Besides, they wonder at and commend other men's works, for they will not be brought to suspect any evil of their neighbours. Therefore, do thou always either praise or excuse others, or else say nothing at all, having ever before thine eyes only thine own vileness and unthankfulness, and wondering that all men do not reprove and detest thee.

8. Thou canst not, my Daughter, obtain humility, except thou love to be humbled, for it is of necessity that a mind disposed to be humbled must ever go before humility. Receive, therefore, all things which I send unto thee as means to humble thee. Delight also to be humbled and contemned of others; suffer thy good name to be slandered; hold thou thy peace and refer thy cause unto me; I know better than thou dost how to defend thy good name. But if thou fightest for thyself, thou needest not my protection. If thou dost with humility and patience bear all, and be silent, I will choose a time wherein I will answer for thee. Do not then, by defending of thyself, prevent my gracious determination towards thee. I will fight for thee, and will have thee to be patient and silent.

CHAPTER XX

OF OBEDIENCE

OBEDIENCE is a most excellent virtue and most acceptable unto me. That work which in itself is vilest and least of all others—if it be done merely for obedience only—it is better accepted of me and more profitable and meritorious unto him that doth it, than infinite others which men do voluntarily and to please their own appetite. Neither canst thou offer unto me, believe me, my Daughter, a more noble and worthy sacrifice, than to present me with a humble heart, obedient and ready to do all things that I shall command. For it may so fall out, as a man by obedience only may clean leave and forsake himself for my sake, and so profit more by denying of his own will and be more inwardly united unto me, than if he had bestowed much time in other most noble exercises.

2. Wherefore thou oughtest, my Daughter, to be always as obedient unto me as if I were ever present with thee in a corporal form, and that thou didst as continually enjoy my presence as a wife doth her husband with whom she dwelleth. When any man shall call thee from me to do some act of obedience, thou oughtest to leave me and obey him,

For this is not a forsaking of me, but a forsaking of thyself, because thou preferrest my honour and my will before thine own commodity and consolation, in that thou dost according to my commandment deny thyself, and seekest not thine own commodity, but the benefit of others. In this sort shouldst thou relinquish thyself and all care to please thyself or to seek thine own commodity. For so, shouldst thou not leave me, but find that which is a hundred times more worthy and profitable for thee than those things which thou forsakest.

3. Learn therefore to leave thyself for my sake, that is, by denying of thine own will, to want that fruit, that consolation and that profit which thou desirest to reap; for by doing thy duty in this sort, both thou honourest me, and not only losest nothing in thy profit, but also obtainest things, though it be by another mean, that are an hundred times better. Wherefore, esteem nothing so precious, neither account thou anything so profitable as that thou wilt not be drawn from it willingly for obedience' sake with a mind wholly resigned to my pleasure. For whatsoever the thing be, that for the love of it, either thou refusest to perform thine obedience, or comest to do it grudgingly or unwillingly, it is the idol of thine own appetite, more pernicious to thee than can be

expressed. If thou be in a place where thou hast no superior, or where thyself art superior, make all men thy superiors, obeying their will and forsaking thine own. Marry, do it not of slothfulness, but wheresoever thou mayest even of thine own desire and of purpose to renounce thyself for my sake.

4. Love the virtue of obedience from the bottom of thy heart, and leave it not as long as thou livest, not only to thy superiors, but also yield, obey, and subject thyself—whensoever thou art not restrained by my will—in all things and to all men for my sake, and that without being grieved with it, repining at it, or disputing about it. And because thou mayest do this the more frankly, respect not the man who by my ordinance is thy superior, whether he be learned or unlearned, an excellent man or a base person. But have regard to this only, that he is by my providence made thy superior, by whom I will govern thee, and in whom thou oughtest to hear me, ask counsel of me and obey me.

5. Therefore, resist not, but yield to this my providence, seeing if I appoint such a man, I have as much care to rule thee and to make thee subject unto me by the mean of so simple a person, as by him that is learned. Yea, I have the like regard of thy well-doing by any whomsoever it shall be my pleasure to appoint over thee. Wherefore, I would

have thee subject thyself unto him without any servile fear or scruple of thy conscience, and despising thine own counsel and wisdom, submit thyself to be governed by his judgement and opinion. Whatsoever he shall determine or appoint thee, accept it from his mouth as from mine own. For I place such superiors over my servants sometime as have small learning and are little practised in those exercises, to the end that they should not regard man's wisdom or respect in the man himself, but rather me in the man, that am their God, and as well able to answer them by a simple man—if they can have faith and confidence in me—as by a learned.

6. And, therefore, whatsoever they shall be answered, or howsoever they shall be counselled at his hand, let them receive it not as from a man, but as from myself, attributing all to me and my direction, and ascribing nothing to the man, whether he be wise or simple. If thou wouldst not, therefore, go astray, walk in the path of obedience, and do nothing at all without the counsel of thy pastor or ghostly Father or superior. Live always in simplicity and poverty of spirit, renouncing quite thine own judgement, thine own counsel, thine own sense, and thine own opinion; neither take any occasion at any time to complain or murmur, esteeming that always best which thy superior, or, if

thou hast none, what other shall think fittest, as long as it is not manifest and apparent sin. And, therefore, fully to mortify and kill in thyself thine own will, thou shouldst not only be obedient unto men, but also subject thyself unto all my creatures for my sake.

7. For thou oughtest so much to hate thine own will, and thou shouldst so much desire to extinguish it, that thou shouldst live amongst men wheresoever thou art, even as if thou wert clean without any will of thine own; that is, as if thou madest no election or choice of any one thing more than another, but accepted of all things indifferently that chanced unto thee, excepting this only, that another man's will, if thou knowest it, must ever please thee better than thine own, so that it be without sin, and that honesty and discretion be observed in it. Yield, therefore, unto all men in those things which are thine, that is, in those things which do properly and only belong unto thyself, in such sort, as if thou hadst professed obedience to them all. Nay, whensoever thou shalt be alone, do not thine own will, but dispose of thyself so as thy whole course of life and all thy exercises may tend to the renouncing of thyself. For this shall be better and more profitable unto thee than the joys of Paradise.

8. And whensoever that my will shall be made known unto thee, whether it be by inward inspiration, or by the Scripture, or by thy superior, or by some other creature of mine, or by any other mean; whensoever also, that thou shalt be inwardly admonished by me, straight despise all that thou hast of thyself, as thine own counsel, thine own judgement, thine own appetite, thine own opinion, thine own liking, or thine own inclination, and follow my will. But thou must have a special care wisely to learn what my will is, lest thou mayest think that thou art governed by my spirit, when in truth thou art directed by thine own, or else by the spirit of error or deceit. To avoid this, therefore, do all things according to the counsel of thy superior, and submit thyself wholly to his will and direction.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW WE MUST MORTIFY OUR OWN WILL AND DESIRE

NOTHING can do thee mischief, O Daughter, but thine own will, which, if thou hast once mortified, no other creature can hurt thee. For what creature can hurt thee if thou beest dead to thyself, and hast mortified thine own

desire? That is, if these words, or rather the affection of these words be mortified in thee, to wit, I, and me, and to me, and mine, which is as much to say, as if there be no respect in the world in thee to please thyself or to serve thine own appetite. Who could hurt thee when I live in thee, and thou in me, whom no creature can resist, but is enforced to serve? Marry, if thou wilt follow or retain still within thee thine own will, all things will resist thee, all things will fight against thee, and in despite of thy teeth, whether thou wilt or no thou must yield in the end, and canst no way escape my providence, although it will be then as a cross to torment thee, and not as a consolation to rejoice thee.

2. But if thou renouncest quite thine own will, that shalt taste an inward peace and joy which that sensual appetite of thine neither knoweth nor is able to conceive; for nothing troubleth the world, but everybody seeking to please their own appetite. Therefore I said to my disciples: In the world—that is in those things which are of the world, to wit, your own desires, which the world seeketh to satisfy—you shall have distress; but have confidence, for I have overcome the world, that both you may overcome in me, and have peace in me also. Begin, therefore, thou also, and taking out this lesson, both mortify and pluck up by the very roots all the desires

of the world and all self-love out of thy heart. Otherwise, how canst thou overcome the world or the devil, if they have their army within thee; that is, if they have their vices lodged within thy soul? Throw out quickly whatsoever is in thee contrary to my will, and whatsoever fighteth against thee in thy spiritual warfare. For neither the world nor the devil can ever come to vanquish thee or in a manner to resist thee, but by the help of those things which they possess in thee.

3. Wherefore they which do persecute thy vices, which do oppress thee, which show unto thee and lay open before thine eyes thine own weakness; to be short, which offend thee, that is, which offend thine own will in thee, and consequently thyself, because thine own will and self-love reigneth in thee; for otherwise they could not offend thee, for that these things, to wit, thy self-will and thy self-love are only hurt and offended; they, therefore, as I said, which do thus offend thine own will in thee, which show thee how thou hast not mortified thine own appetite, are thy special friends and benefactors. These thou oughtest to love, and withal to be glad, because they do persecute thine own appetite, which is thy worst adversary and only dangerous enemy. Therefore, if thou wilt wisely use and take

the benefit of this occasion, the more that thine own will is repressed in thee, the stronger thou shalt grow, and the greater force thou shalt have.

4. The less rule that thine own appetite hath over thee, the more interest have I still in thee, and the farther that it is banished from thee, the more fully do I possess thee; because, following of thine own will, if it do thee no other hurt, yet it doth ever certainly bring this mischief upon thee, that it suffereth not me to have operation and possession in thee. Wherefore it depriveth thee of me which am infinite goodness itself. For though thou labour never so much, and devise never so many means, thou shalt never find any other way to come unto me than this, which I have taught my disciples, saying: He that will come after me, let him deny himself, that is, let him leave, mortify, and quite forsake his own will, take up his cross and follow me. Begin, therefore, with this, for this of necessity thou must do; whatsoever thou forsakest, if thou forsakest not thyself, thou hast forsaken nothing. And contrariwise, if thou possessest not thyself, but leavest thyself to be possessed by me, thou hast forsaken all things for my sake, although thou livest in all abundance of wealth and honour. The more that thou goest out of thyself, the farther do I enter into thee, and

as much as thou dost die unto thyself, so much do I live in thee. If thou displeasest thyself, I will be the sweeter unto thee.

5. Forsake, therefore, all things, that thou mayest find all things; that is, forsake thyself, that thou mayest find me. How long wilt thou stay, my Daughter? How long wilt thou stand amazed? All thy distress proceedeth only of that extreme self-love which possesseth thy heart, and of the small confidence thou hast in me. Forsake, therefore, thyself, and believe me. Dost thou think that I can deceive thee? Why dost thou not commit thyself to me? Why dost thou not trust in my goodness? What art thou able to profit thyself or what good canst thou do to thyself? What art thou without me? Art thou in danger if, committing thyself to me, thou renouncest thine own will? See to whom thou committest thyself! To me, verily, without whom thou shouldst have no being at all, or be anyways able to stand, much less then to be safe or well. Wilt thou, then, commit thyself unto me, with whom thou canst never be ill? Wilt thou, then, commit thyself unto me, who cannot reject thee, who cannot forsake thee, who cannot deceive thee, who cannot but love thee? Throw thyself into my arms, I pray thee, and rely thyself wholly upon me with confidence and without delay; I will receive

thee, I will preserve thee. Without me, thou art as though thou wert not at all; therefore, if thou lovest thyself, reject thyself and embrace me, that I may also embrace thee, and unite thee close unto me, as no man shall be able to hurt or touch thee, but that he must first of necessity hurt and touch me.

6. Wherefore, leave thyself with a glad and willing mind, that thou mayest neither seek, wish nor choose this or that, of any respect, love or inclination which thou carriest to thyself, but let all things be indifferent to thee, only thou shouldst for my sake esteem that dearest and desire that most, which thou knowest is most acceptable unto me. For thou oughtest to meditate of that prayer always in thy heart, which I offered unto my Father in the Garden, when I was going to my passion, saying: O Lord, thy will be done. Likewise: Not mine, but thy will be done. And this also: Teach me to do thy will, because thou art my God. Or else this: Let it be done unto me according to thy good pleasure.

7. But wilt thou know how much thou hast forsaken thyself, or how much thou hast mortified thine own will? See, when loss of anything, when reproaches, when injuries, do happen unto thee, whether thou beest troubled with them, and whether thou beest more troubled when they happen to thee than

when they happen to other men. By this thou shalt find the love which thou bearest to creatures; yea, thou shalt perceive the affection which thou carriest to thyself. For thou dost therefore love temporal goods; thou dost therefore love honour; thou dost therefore love quiet; and thou dost therefore love such miserable and transitory things, because thou lovest thyself. For thou wishest to enjoy these things, whereas, if thou didst love me, thou shouldst rather banish all these things quite from thy heart for my sake, and take all adversity as willingly as thou wouldst possess happiness. To be short, thou shouldst not be more, but rather much less troubled when adversity happeneth to thyself, than when it happeneth to others. For thou shouldst never be grieved with any accident in this world, but only when thou showest thyself irreverent or contemptuous towards me.

8. Therefore, he that will forsake himself, my Daughter, his only labour, exercise, and the whole scope of his desire, must tend, not partly, but altogether, to mortify his own appetite, to renounce his own will, to be transformed into a new shape, and to be in all sort free and delivered from any impediment whatsoever which lieth in the way, and maketh a division betwixt him and me. The least impediments are cogitations and

forms of creatures which men frame in their mind; the greatest is a man's own will, which, the stronger it is, and the more large place it occupieth and possesseth in a man, the less I am present there, and so, consequently, the less do I possess in his soul. As long, therefore, as thou findest an inclination or natural desire to one thing more than another, thou art not yet perfectly mortified, but thou hast somewhat remaining in thee which thou must mortify and extinguish.

9. What motion soever thou feelest in thyself that proceedeth not from me; what thing soever goeth about to busy, alter or possess thy mind; what likeness soever of anything doth labour to imprint itself within thy heart; whatsoever seeketh to draw thy liking to it or to grieve or overwhelm thee, endeavour thou with a recollected mind, close shut within itself and lifted up to me, lightly to pass over and carelessly to despise all hope and fear, gain and loss, quiet and labour, joy and grief, mirth and sadness, and all such things as may seek to possess thy heart, with all affection that thou mayest carry towards them. For if thou fix thy mind upon me, thou shalt easily tread all these things under thy feet. But if thou lovest thyself, if thou hast not wholly renounced thine own self, thou shalt always feel, by following of thine own appetite, joy

and grief, anger and fear, care, and infinite other passions.

10. Wherefore, thou canst never be quiet, except thou hast clean mortified thyself, and forgotten thine own self wholly. Thou must quite abandon thyself that thou mayest live in me only, and bend thyself to be wise in me only, and be sensible to feel nothing but me only. Thou shalt want nothing, if thou be content in this sort to want thyself. Thou shalt want nothing as long as thou art with me; I will have care of thee, I will protect thee; thou canst lose nothing in losing of thyself after this sort, for thou shalt find in me that which is a hundred times better than the things which thou hast lost for my sake.

11. Cast, therefore, all thy care, all thy trouble, all thy fear, and even thyself also, upon me and commit thyself to me. Hope and trust in me; thy hope cannot deceive thee, neither can it possibly be too great if thou leadest a good and penitent life. Whatsoever thou wouldst complain of to a man that is thy friend, reveal the same unto me. I will take care of thee, I will maintain thee, I will defend thee. Wherefore, see that thou regard me only, being quite banished from thyself within thee, that thou mayest mortify and extinguish thyself, that is, by rooting out thy desires, thy self-love, thy sensual

appetites, and by renouncing all those delights of thine which thou didst desire before, and for which unlawful desires I was not thy God, nor thou my servant. O my Daughter, thou oughtest to labour with all thy force that thou mayest attain to this obedience, this forsaking of thine own will for my sake, and thou oughtest to resign thyself so wholly unto me, and so far to subject thyself to my will, as thou shouldst have no other will at all in thyself, but only that which is my will and pleasure.

CHAPTER XXII

OF THE CONSIDERATION OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

As long as there remaineth any choice, election, or inclination in thee, that moveth thee to take more pleasure, to be better contented, and to receive greater consolation by one thing than by another, there resteth something of thine own in thee, and thou hast not yet fully renounced thyself. For thou oughtest to take all things indifferently and equally, without either more joy or more grief at one time than another, and only to depend and rely upon my providence. For this course would procure thee the greatest liberty, the greatest peace and the greatest quietness to thy soul.

2. Stand not, therefore, upon thyself, believe not thine own wit or thine own force, trust not in thine own ability, promise thyself nothing upon thine own warrant, build nothing upon thine own imagination, and do nothing of thine own head; neither have confidence in thine own profiting, or in thine own will, although it be indeed good. But forsaking in all sorts thine own self, go out of thyself, and renouncing quite all the property which thou hast in thyself, rest and repose thyself in me only, trust in my goodness, rely upon my grace and upon my providence. Be ready at all times without any choice, without any difference and without any murmuring in thy heart, to receive for the fulfilling of my pleasure, adversity as willingly as prosperity, both temporally and eternally, desiring always this only thing, that thou mayest ever be in all respects according to my will.

3. And, therefore, regard not how much or how little thou profitest, how near or how far thou art from me, how great or how small gifts thou hast of me; nor yet, whether thou shalt be in purgatory or no, how long or when thou shalt suffer those pains, but refer thyself wholly to my providence, and desire nothing but that thou mayest ever be found best contented with that which agreeth most with my pleasure, and wish not for any greater

good, neither think that greater can possibly happen unto thee, than that my first, last, and most laudable will be fulfilled in thee. Wherefore, seek to please me in all such sort as is most agreeable to my will; let my will be both thy perfection and the measure of thy perfection.

4. Trouble not thy heart with any question or imagination of future things; take no care for those things that be uncertain and may happen, but leave all these things to me which governeth all, for it may so fall out, as that evil which is expected or feared, may not happen; or, if it do happen, when it is present, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. For, howsoever, or whatsoever doth by my permission chance unto thee, my providence ought to please thee above all things, and thou oughtest to praise me for it, and to hold this as an undoubted truth, that that is ever best for thee which doth so happen unto thee, and that it was foreseen and fore-appointed by my gracious hand, to fall upon thee for thy commodity; as thou dost with full confidence wholly depend upon my goodness. To conceive well of me, to trust firmly in me, these things be, as it were, trumpets, whereby men do sound out my goodness. And, therefore, when I find these things in any man, they please me so much, as I can never forsake him, nor

suffer any evil or dangerous thing to happen unto him, which hath thus settled his hope in me.

5. The greater hope and trust, therefore, that thou hast in me, the more fully and perfectly thou shalt obtain thy desire. And, whatsoever shall happen unto thee, if thou believest that I am so good and gracious, as I will turn all thy adversities and all things that persecute thee or are thine enemies, to thy good, that is, to thy benefit, I will not deceive thee, but do it indeed. And if, at the least, thou canst frame thyself to accept all things in this sort, it shall so come to pass out of all doubt as I have said. Yet my devout friends are wont to pray that I may deliver them from purgatory, and it is no ill petition.

6. But when thou art come to perfection and prayest, lying prostrate at the feet of my majesty, thou shalt desire to satisfy my justice with that small ability which resteth in thee, and shalt offer thyself for my glory unto purgatory, and to suffer for the fulfilling of my will, whatsoever it shall be my will to lay upon thee, and the fulfilling of my will shall please thee more than the escaping of purgatory. Therefore, if thou shalt overcome by my grace that inordinate love and zeal which thou carriest toward thyself and for thyself, to please thy senses and thine

own will, and perfectly with a full confidence wouldst commit thyself unto me, and rely upon me only, thou shouldst find that my grace would work wonders in thee. Study, therefore, to please me, my Daughter, and with thinking of me, clean forget thyself, and I will so continually think of thee and be such an assistant unto thee, as I will never forsake thee.

7. Once again I say unto thee, accept all things which happen unto thee as sent purely, simply and immediately from my hand, and not from any creature, admiring, praising and accepting in all things of my providence with joy and gladness, and with love and thanksgiving to me for my goodness. For in all those things which happen unto thee I do intend and work thy salvation; and with a singular affection, being mindful of thee, I send and appoint these things for thee, to the end that thou mayest either do or suffer such things as may move me to have mercy upon thee.

8. Endeavour thou, therefore, to draw out of all things which thou seest and feelest, and out of all things which do happen unto thee, an occasion to praise and honour me, that thou mayest be worthy to understand the true cause why I permitted them, that is, with how great charity I sent them unto thee, and how thou oughtest to refer all these

things unto my pleasure, to trust in me, and withal, to offer thyself for my glory, even unto the Fountain from whence they flowed, that is, unto my goodness. If thou wert perfectly acquainted with this exercise whereby thou shouldst as willingly accept sorrow as comfort at my hand, and shouldst also know how to find me in every one of my creatures, nothing could then seem contrary and overthwart unto thee that thou wouldst not contemn and despise; yea, nothing could be so contrary unto my nature and majesty, but that it would put thee in mind to offer sacrifice unto me, for I am in every creature, and without me no creature can have any being.

9. Wherefore, no creature is so near to himself as I, who am most near and inward with them all. Wherefore, thou oughtest to be so poor in spirit, as there should be nothing that thou didst either love or mislike, seek or fly, fear or desire, for any respect to thyself, but only for the fulfilling of my will, which at all times and in all places thou shalt come wonderfully to understand, by those things which I ordain and permit, if thou seekest me with a pure mind, and hast regard to consider of my providence.

CHAPTER XXIII

HOW WE MUST BEAR ADVERSITY

RECEIVE all adversity and tribulation as a messenger and token of my grace which approacheth towards thee. And, therefore, whensoever thou findest thyself oppressed with any trouble or adversity, rejoice, knowing that thou hast deserved it, and impute not that which thou sufferest to anybody, but to thine own sins. And withal, give me thanks that, looking upon thee with the eyes of my mercy, I have vouchsafed to bestow so much favour on thee as to visit, prove and correct thee here with a rod, like my child, and have not utterly rejected thee, as thou didst deserve. For as long as I chasten thee, as long as I scourge thee, it is a sign that I desire thou shouldst amend. But if I withdraw my correction, leaving thee wholly to thyself, thou shalt seem then to have rest and be quiet, but thou art most unhappy, when I have withdrawn from thee that care and regard which I had of thee, and that thou art no longer in my custody.

2. Whatsoever, therefore, that thou sufferest, say unto thyself, I have deserved more grievous punishment; but although thou hadst deserved none, yet thou shouldst bear

all those adversities which I lay upon thee, for the love of me and for my sake—lest that otherwise my good pleasure should not be fulfilled—even gladly with a most patient and loving mind towards me, considering that I suffered so many grievous torments for thy salvation. And yet, although I had suffered nothing, do not I deserve that thou shouldst suffer somewhat for my sake, in respect of those infinite benefits which I daily pour upon thee, seeing all that thou hast, thou receivest from me only?

3. Lastly, suppose that there were none of these reasons to move thee, yet oughtest thou to remember that thou art mine, created and made by me, and no less in my power to be framed every way according to my will, than earth is when it is in the hand of the potter. And that it is, therefore, in my power, and a part of my justice, to do with thee whatsoever I will, and it is no more lawful for thee to gainsay me, than for the earth to gainsay the potter. For what hast thou to say against me, who am thy Creator, whether I send thee comfort or sorrow? But knowing that thou hast committed so much wickedness as thou hast done, why dost thou not rather desire that the contempt wherewith thou hast despised my goodness should be punished in thee, and thy proud and arrogant mind humbled?

4. But there is yet another reason to move thee the rather hereunto; that is, because I am one which do love thee most faithfully, and do provide all things that are best and most wholesome for thee. And seeing it was my will before I created thee, that thou shouldst suffer at this hour and at this moment, those same things which thou dost suffer, thou oughtest to desire above all things that this, my most loving will, being full of all fidelity and charity towards thee, may be fulfilled in thee, so as thou shouldst endure all those things which thou dost suffer with gladness, with a sweet kind of patience, with thanksgiving, with meekness and with devotion in thy heart, having no choleric nor bitter thought against those that seek to lay those adversities and vexations upon thee; but rather, thou shouldst take them as my ministers in this behalf, appointed and commanded by me to this purpose; and thou shouldst consider, having thine eyes fixed upon me only, with how loving, how kind, and how faithful a heart towards thee, I have sent thee these troubles for thy benefit.

5. Receive, therefore, all affliction whatsoever falleth upon thee as sent from my hand only, without any other mean; and take it as sent by me of love towards thee for thy commodity; accept it as gladly as I do send

it lovingly. And when thou sufferest no adversity, think that my good-will is alienated from thee, and that I am offended with thee, because I withdraw afflictions and tribulations from thee, which is the notablest gift and ornament wherewith I am wont to honour and beautify my friends.

6. Recount with thyself how great vexations, how great persecutions, how great contradictions, how great torments, how great and wearisome toils I suffered; how great my most dear Mother endured; and to be short, how great all my friends walking in my steps have sustained. Remember also that no man attaineth to eternal glory but by the cross and cup of affliction, and that there is no other way but this highway to the heavenly country; which way of necessity thou must pass through if thou desirest to enjoy our company in eternal happiness. Lastly, consider that there is nothing so small or so little worth which either thou doest or sufferest for my sake, but that thou shalt receive a very great and glorious reward of me for it. And yet, notwithstanding, I will not have thee to serve me, or to suffer these things in hope of reward, but only of mere love towards me. I know what reward I will give thee. I say, I will, because I do not owe it thee in any other sort, than for that it is my will to

bestow it upon thee. For all my gifts are of free grace.

7. Think not thou, therefore, of any reward, be not so base-minded; but think of me with a more noble, loving and faithful heart, and submit thyself unto me, even of mere love for mine own sake, to endure whatsoever my will is to lay upon thee. If thou knowest, my Daughter, what great fruit is reaped by tribulations, thou wouldest esteem it as a great happiness to glory in crosses and afflictions. The greater adversities, therefore, that do happen unto thee, and the more contrary that they are to thy desires—yea, although they repugn such desires of thine as are to please me—the more earnestly thou shouldst endeavour patiently to suffer them, and the more wholly thou shouldst resign thyself unto me. For it is done by my will and providence that thy will sometime be hindered, yea, even when it is good, that by this mean, for one virtue thou mayest obtain two, and, withal, mayest receive the reward of a good work for thy good-will, although thou be not permitted to put it in execution, and for the adversity which did hinder thy will, thou shalt receive a crown of patience.

8. Thou mayest add to all these, for thy further encouragement, this one reason also, that the more thy good-will is tempted

by adversity, and the faithfuller it is found, and the more patient it is in bearing of crosses and such things as resist it, the more glorious the crown is which I have laid up to reward it. Therefore, because I love thee, I will have thee to be wholly and purely a faithful spouse unto me. I will have thee to serve me with renouncing all interest in thyself, and to go, not whither thou wilt, but whither I send or lead thee. Neither must thou seek withal to serve thine own appetite when thou labourest in these things to please me, but rather, as a faithful, devout, and obedient handmaid, which hath no will to do anything but that which is agreeable to the will of her mistress. Thou must seek in nothing to please thyself, but me only, with all sincerity and purity in thy intention, and that must be always most acceptable unto thee which I lay upon thee to suffer, whether it be by the hands of men, or any other mean whatsoever.

9. Respect not, therefore, men; neither impute it to men if thou sustainest any adversity. What blame doth the rod deserve if the father, seeking to correct his son, doth use it? Why then art thou angry with men, which, being my instruments, serve as a scourge to correct thee? Seek not, therefore, to resist them or to argue against them, but have a special care that thine own impatience

do not hurt thyself, and lest thou lose that benefit by repining which thou shouldst have gained by patient suffering. Be, therefore, courteous and gentle towards all men in taking patiently whatsoever shall happen. Carry a mild countenance and use a humble behaviour, that no choler, nor exclaiming, no dejection of thy mind nor sorrow appear in thee, nor yet that anything may be found in thee which may make men to think that thou endurest some affliction or art oppressed with some trouble.

10. If any man reprove or reproach thee, show him a mild and gentle countenance, holding thy peace, and smile with a certain kind of bashfulness and modesty, in token of thy charity, which accepteth it in good part, and which taketh all things well, without either thinking of revenge or remembering of an injury. Beware that thou speakest not at that time above two or three words, and that with great temperance. And by this mean thou shalt show thyself so humble and meek, as every man may presume to reprove thee, and no man be afraid to displease thee, or to use any reproach towards thee. Learn in all adversity whensoever any man doth chide thee, reproach thee, or injure thee, to use silence, to bear it patiently, and to be quiet, and thou shalt assuredly find my grace which thou canst never attain unto

by any other mean than by being quiet, and suffering patiently whatsoever I shall lay upon thee, being as willing, if it stand with my pleasure, to receive adversity as to enjoy prosperity.

11. Thou hast, my Daughter and Spouse, my life as a perfect example of patience and meekness; neither did I speak it without great reason, when I said: Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart, seeing that my life was a lively pattern of patience, humility and meekness. For in the middle of all my pains and torments, of all the derisions and blasphemies which mine enemies used towards me, of all their cruel threatenings, of their most wicked and despiteful countenances against me, what complaint or show of repining at this dealing of theirs proceeded from me? Which of my enemies did I curse? To which of them did I speak sharply? Which of them did I answer? To which of them did I wish any harm? Nay, rather, was I not sorry for them, when I did pray for them all? Follow thou, therefore, my example, and have patience still joined with quietness and tranquillity of thy soul, and be meek without murmuring or complaining. Fight not for thyself; answer not for thyself; defend not, neither yet excuse thyself; hold thy peace and commit both thyself

and thy cause to my protection; I will fight for thee.

12. Cleave, therefore, in the meantime wholly unto me, in all quietness, without any perturbation or motion in thy soul, being ready, with all gladness, rather to suffer any confusion for my sake than either inwardly in thy mind, or outwardly in thy show, to use the least murmuring in the world against me. As long as thou thinkest that thou art wronged; as long as thou believest, my Daughter, that thou sufferest unjustly, or hast not deserved those things which thou sufferest, thou art neither come to true patience, nor yet to a perfect knowledge of thyself.

13. Wherefore, I would wish thee to be always ready with a joyful and devout heart to run and meet any adversity that shall light upon thee, and offer thyself unto me, as one that is willing to suffer tribulations, to want all things that thou desirest, and both to take any travail, and to bear any misery in what sort soever it shall be my pleasure to appoint. Think that day lost wherein thou hast not received some notable cross. If thou knewest what great commodity is reaped by patience, thou wouldst do great honour, and show great thankfulness to those that afflict thee. Consider how I, as an innocent Lamb, did carry a most meek and

quiet mind, void of all bitterness towards those which did spit upon me, scourge me, and crucify me, and how I excused them and prayed for them. In like sort must thou do, and not count anything injury that is done unto thee, nor yet believe that injuries can be offered thee; but regard me only, respect me wholly, and thou shalt come to learn that I, and no other, have done all these things merely of love towards thee.

14. By doing thus, my Daughter, there is nothing in any creature which will not be a mean and an occasion for thee to obtain my grace more abundantly, because thou shalt find me in every one of them, so that thou dost contemplate upon the creature, not as a creature, but upon me in the creature, as thou oughtest to do. And if thou doest in this behalf as thou oughtest, thou shalt receive me, thou shalt hear me, thou shalt feel me in every one of my creatures, for I do speak unto thee in them all. Hearken, therefore, unto me and learn by everything that happeneth unto thee what I would have thee do, and when thou knowest my will, be ever most ready to perform it. If thou didst give care unto me after this manner, the world, and all things contained therein, should be a book of instructions for thee to direct thee in that course which agreeth most with my pleasure.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF WANTING OF CONSOLATION

THE high way, and also the most excellent way, wherein all my perfect friends have walked, and wherein thou must also walk, is, to want all kinds of consolation, when thou art compassed in on every side with adversity and distress, and to be so poor, as there may be nothing left to which thou mayest turn thyself for succour, to which thou mayest fly unto for refuge, or in which thou mayest trust; nor yet, that there be any man whom thou mayest seek counsel of, or in whom thou mayest have confidence, but in me only, that by this mean thou mayest have no other thing to remain for thee to do, but only that all thy care and cogitations may tend to devise how thou mayest profit and set forth my glory, in sustaining of those afflictions, both inwardly in thy mind, and by having a desire to offer thyself unto them, and outwardly in thy behaviour, by serving of all creatures, and subjecting thyself unto them all, in such sort as if it were lawful for them, without committing any offence or doing thee any injury, to afflict thee and tread thee under their feet; yea, as if they did in this no more than I charged and commanded them.

2. In doing thus, thou shouldst be free from all complaining, from all disputing, from all grudging and from all malice against thy neighbour. And by this account thou shouldst love those best which did oppress thee most. Because they did open the way unto thee whereby thou mayest come to renounce thyself, and gave thee an opportunity both to please me, and show thyself thankful toward me. Moreover, thou shouldst rejoice that they offered thee a good occasion to exercise virtue and to try thy love towards me; and thou wouldst desire this above all things, if thou didst indeed perfectly love me.

3. There is yet another perfection greater than this, and in a higher degree, that is, to be destitute both of all earthly and heavenly consolation, being loaden with temptations, distresses, vexations, doubts, fears, perplexities, and adversities, and to be, as it were, utterly rejected from me and quite forgotten by me; and yet, notwithstanding all this, not to fly from me and go to my creatures, not to depart from me and seek worldly help, nor yet to desire that consolations and revelations should be imparted unto thee. But still to trust me, to expect patiently my pleasure, to cleave unto me with a pure faith and perfect charity, and to be ready to continue in this state as long as it shall be

my will to permit it. Nay, which is more, to refer themselves wholly unto me, and to offer themselves to suffer both these, and any other thing whatsoever for the fulfilling of my will and setting forth of my glory, and to praise me in all these distresses, in such sort as they are able, although it be but with a dry and barren heart.

CHAPTER XXV

OF INWARD PEACE AND MEEKNESS OF HEART

THOU hast understood sufficiently, my Spouse, how thou oughtest to be patient, and in patience, meek; that is, how thou oughtest to bear all things with so indifferent, peaceable and quiet a mind—for meekness is no other thing than perfect tranquillity in true patience—as nothing should be able to make thee sad, or to vex or trouble thee, whatsoever did happen unto thee that proceeded not from me in my wrath and displeasure, whether it were for a time or for eternity, excepting this only, which thou must always carry for a firm resolution, that thou wilt never be excluded from my grace and charity, nor yet, in thine own will, be withdrawn or divided from me. For this thou must not neglect, but take care of above all things,

that thou mayest always be united unto me in perfect charity.

2. Thou must also remember, in what place soever thou beest, what pain or consolation soever thou feelest—if the same be for the setting forth of my glory, and by my special pleasure—that thou rejoice in it, because by it thou obeyest my will, being ready in every sort to be according as it shall best agree with my will, either comforted or afflicted. And when thou art settled in this resolution, no loss of any external thing that happeneth unto thee in this world can grieve thee. For nothing can chance that is contrary to thy liking, as long as my will is always thy will, and that thou hast no other will in thee but that which is my pleasure. Therefore, then, as I said, let my will be always fulfilled in all things. And it should be the greatest joy that thou couldst have, when my will is performed in thee. For thou art then fully settled in thine inward man, in all peace and tranquillity, although thou findest in thine own outward man, distress and desolation, which notwithstanding thou dost patiently take without any perturbation, because thy will is in all things agreeable to mine.

3. Be quiet in this manner, my Daughter, providing so all fury and all kind of repining be altogether extinguished in thee, and that

thine irascible power or faculty be even so fully mortified in thee as to be immovable, and not to be stirred by any accident. Let thy concupiscible power also be established in virtue as it may be wholly lifted up unto me. And let thy reasonable power, taking part of their joys, accord with them, so as thy conscience, enjoying peace and quietness within itself, thy whole soul may be in perfect tranquillity.

CHAPTER XXVI

OF THE LOVE WHICH WE SHOULD BEAR TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR

Let thy heart towards thy neighbour, my Daughter, be full of compassion and a chaste kind of love. I call that a chaste love which defileth not the heart with concupiscence, nor doth busy it with too much familiarity or too often keeping of company, nor doth stain it with any inordinate affection, nor doth disquiet it with thoughts that procure distraction in thy soul, nor doth trouble it with importunity of vain desires, nor doth occupy thy imagination with multitude of fancies or impressions of divers things; but without choice of persons or regard of sex, doth embrace all sorts of men and women for my sake, with abundance of charity

and for it only, without any other respect at all.

2. Therefore, being full of a devout kind of good-will and pure charity, rejoice with everyone in all the benefits and commodities which they receive, whether it be touching their soul or body, and ever flowing with a kind of compassion which can never cease running. Lament with everyone in their necessities and tribulations, pouring out the streams of thy courtesy, affability, mercy and pity to all men. And see that thou beest inflamed with a ready desire and willing mind to comfort them and to help them to bear the burthen of their troubles, esteeming their corporal or spiritual afflictions thine own, and carrying the unspeakable affection of a most tender mother towards all men whatsoever. Endeavour, therefore, to excuse every man, and to do them good by thy prayers, benefits, and all the pleasures that lieth in thy power. And upon such as thou canst bestow no other benefit, seek to mitigate their sorrow with thy courteous behaviour, thy sweet speech, or any other means that thou art able.

3. Take special heed that thou neither judgest nor despisest any man, because it both harmeth thy soul and, besides, displeaseth me wonderfully. And, therefore, exclude by all the means thou mayest,

suspicions and ill-conceits of other men from thee; excuse also all those who fall and offend. When thou seest one to sin, say within thyself that he was permitted to fall for his greater amendment; that he had a good intention, and was deceived either by ignorance or error; that his infirmity being too strongly assaulted with temptation was enforced to yield. Say and speak it unfeignedly from thy heart, that thou hadst fallen much more heinously than he did, if this temptation had assaulted thee. Thou oughtest not with one and the selfsame but with a divers eye to look upon thine own and thy neighbour's acts. For thou shouldst judge of thine own with a severe eye, aggravating thine imperfections, and not esteeming, or seeking to lessen, thy virtues.

4. And, on the contrary part, thou shouldst make reckoning of thy neighbour's imperfections as very small, and of his virtues as very great. Wherefore, take care always neither to speak or hear ill of others. Never reprove thy neighbour in anger, though he deserved to be blamed. For what doth it profit thee if thou curest him and woundest thyself? Or what doth the medicine avail, if by it thou goest about to heal one wound, and in the meantime makest ten others? Expect thou a time wherein thou mayest have fit opportunity to reprove him, and then

reprove him with the spirit of lenity and sweetness, rather by entreating him and exhorting him than by handling him sharply or roughly, making thy hearty prayers unto me, with sorrowful groans, that this reproving of thine may be effectual, and work his salvation.

5. Take heed that thou beest not the cause of breeding dissension, discord, or hatred amongst men, but let all thy speech in all places tend to peace, being mindful that I said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. If any man offend thee, if any man persecute thee with malice, requite his wrongs with benefits, his hard and sour countenance with a sweet and meek behaviour, his sharp and reproachful words with mild and gentle answers, and by this means thou shalt more easily bring him to the knowledge of his own fault.

6. Let all the labours, miseries, poverty, contempt and sorrows which thou seest men endure put thee in mind of those labours, afflictions, contempts, pains, and many other sharp and grievous miseries which I suffered for thy sake, that thou mayest by this mean behold me, find me, perceive me, perfectly love me, daily suffer with me, and continually be transformed into me, by everything which thou seest in every man.

CHAPTER XXVII

OF PURITY OF HEART

ENDEAVOUR to have such purity in thy heart as, being withdrawn from all earthly cogitations, thou mayest not addict thyself to any delight, nay, that thou mayest seek no delight or take delight in anything, or content thyself with the desire of any delight whatsoever. Cut off also, not only unlawful thoughts, but all such as be idle and unprofitable, suffering none of them to enter into thee. Let thy firm resolution be to think nothing but either of me, or for my sake.

2. Receive not into thy heart as near as thou canst, the similitude and forms of earthly things, but thrust out all such impressions and fancies as soon as ever they begin to appear. Cast all thy cares and troubles upon me; be not disquieted with anything whatsoever shall happen. Keep ever a watchful guard over thy heart, that no inordinate affection to man, woman, or any other creature, no sensual desire, no vicious passion, no concupiscence, no ill inclination or wicked intention may rest in thee.

3. Never give thy consent that any separation, although it be never so little, remain

between me and thee, and see that thou dost in nothing either seek or respect thyself, but me only, purely, simply and wholly. Lift up thy heart in every place unto me, and keep it still raised from all earthly cogitations, that whatsoever thou hast to speak, to deal in, or to think of, thou do first deal with me in it by prayer and by the internal discourse of thy spirit. Let every action and external business give thee matter and occasion to pray, yea, let the very occupation and business of thy heart be no other thing but a continual and daily prayer.

4. See nothing, though it be never so far from the nature of prayer, so deformed or so contrary to all goodness, but draw thou presently out of it some occasion to pray unto me and to praise my name. Let all things be means for thee to lift up thy heart and to raise thy affection unto me. What fair thing soever thou seest, what pleasant or delightful thing soever thou feelest, acknowledge it to proceed from me, and let it put thee in mind of my beauty and glory, that I only may be thy whole delight and consolation. Let all things edify thee, and whatsoever happeneth unto thee, take opportunity by it to meditate upon something that may be profitable for thy soul.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOW WE OUGHT TO REFER ALL THE GOOD THINGS WE RECEIVE TO THE GOODNESS OF GOD

CHALLENGE nothing to thyself by any of my works, or by the mean of those gifts which I bestow upon thee. Thou oughtest to acknowledge my gifts to my honour and to wonder at my liberality and charity bestowed upon thee, without any desert of thine own and my most gracious bounty. And withal thou must ever have presented before thine eyes thine own baseness, and how thou art of thyself merely nothing, that by this consideration thou mayest not ascribe or challenge anything to thyself out of those gifts which I bestowed upon thee, neither yet be rejoiced or delighted with any thing that thou receivest from me, or for that I have wrought any good thing in thee.

2. Thou oughtest not, I say, for any of these, to rejoice in thyself or be glad for thine own sake, that is, because thou hast attained to some goodness, for that should be a rejoicing altogether in thyself. But thou shouldst rejoice in me, and for my gracious bounty that I have been so good, so liberal, so gentle and so merciful to a most unworthy and unthankful creature. Which goodness of

mine, the viler that thou art, doth the more manifestly appear in thee.

3. Rejoice, therefore, in my gifts, not attributing any praise thereby to thyself, but ascribing the whole glory unto me. And behave thyself so discreetly in receiving any of my gifts—excepting thankfulness and humility, which must ever increase in thee—as if nothing had been given thee, nothing had been wrought in thee, and that thou didst feel no good at all; directing thine eyes to thine own unworthiness which art of thyself merely nothing; and to thine own disability, which art able to do nothing; and to thine own imperfection, which cannot attain to the smallest goodness without my grace; that by this mean thou mayest not be extolled in thine own conceit, or rejoice in thine own ability, or flatter thyself with thine own power, but attribute all unto me only.

4. If thou feelest, therefore, any sweet inspiration or any lightening of my grace within thee, or that by my mercy thou art enabled to do another man a benefit or good turn, thou mayest rejoice in the good which I did by thee as my instrument, but in no sort rejoice in thyself: that is, not to flatter or please thine own appetite, for in it lieth hidden self-love, nor to think that it was done by thine own power, but rather turn

away thy heart from that which was done, and from thyself also, that thou mayest never join together these two cogitations, which is, thyself and my benefit, except it be, as I said, when thou comparest my infinite goodness with thy unspeakable baseness. Suffer it to pass over for that time, as though it had not been done at all, and as though thou understood no such matter: and fix all thy cogitations in the mean season upon me, and not upon the gift which thou hast received from me.

5. Look never, therefore, into the gift itself, neither settle thy mind in that consideration, nor rejoice in it, nor yet be contented to rest there; neither stay if thou feelest any motion in examining and searching curiously within thyself, what thou feelest or what thou doest, or whether the motion proceed from me or from some other cause—for this doth ever make a division between thee and me, and doth stay thee longer from coming unto me—but rather pass quickly through all these cogitations and remove them clean from thee, and endeavour to unite thyself more nearly and firmly unto me. Choose rather not to know the things which after this sort do busy the mind, than with a curious search to hinder my grace and to procure thereby danger to thyself either of being puffed up with pride, or of pleasing

thyself, or of rejoicing by the provocation of self-love in thine own ability, or for thine own glory. But refer these, as all other things, unto me. Only hold this with a resolute and assured mind, for an infallible principle, that if I do grant thee any good gift, it is given merely without desert to an unthankful and an unworthy creature.

6. This kind of humility doth wonderfully please me, that thou shouldst be afraid and troubled in respect of thine own baseness, unworthiness and unthankfulness, and be timorous with the consideration of these things, and feel a shamefacedness and disquiet thereby, and rather think that thou feelest no good thing at all, or that the motion proceedeth not from me, than to stay upon the consideration thereof and rejoice therein. Remember also, that I forbade my Apostles to rejoice in those miracles which they wrought, or to take any glory because unclean spirits did submit themselves unto them and obeyed them, although they were not ignorant but did assuredly know that this gift proceeded from me.

7. In like sort, therefore, my Daughter, glory not thou in thyself, neither rejoice without me for any consolation or gift which thou receivest; that is, rejoice no otherwise in it than may tend to the magnifying of my

name, neither stay in consideration of the thing itself—for therein doth ever some self-love lie lurking, which doth easily beguile those that be not heedful—but rejoice in me only, that is, rejoice because I have showed my glory and fulfilled my will in thee. Seek no glory to thyself by my gifts, neither covet to usurp or challenge to thyself any praise thereby, neither yet ascribe anything to thine own ability. Ascribe nothing at all, I say, to thyself or thine own power, neither suffer any other man to attribute anything to thine own worthiness, nor rejoice in it, as if it were thine own act, but refer all unto me, and keep thyself from all manner of propriety in thyself, from attributing anything to thine own worthiness, from desiring anything for thine own pleasure, or rejoicing in anything for thine own delight. Live without following thine own counsel, thine own judgement, thine own opinion.

8. If thou desirest, my Daughter, to be my spouse, keep thy heart chaste and pure, free and quite alienated from any other love but mine only, and from being possessed by any of my creatures, that it may be left whole for me to dwell in, which am thy Creator. As often as thou findest any sensual or natural love in thy mind to man, woman, or any other creature whatsoever, so often remember

with sorrowful groans to lift up thy soul unto me, earnestly desiring my grace and my favour only, which is a most safe refuge, a most happy haven for thee, and that not for a time, but endless and eternal.

9. Whatsoever, therefore, doth busy thy senses with any cogitations towards any of my creatures, is neither pure nor without danger to thy soul. Whensoever also, thy natural appetite receiveth any recreation, comfort or delight, if thou seekest to attain to a perfect purity, thou must of necessity renounce that pleasure, whether it be in words or any other earthly thing. Thou must pass over all things with a free mind, in no sort subject or in bondage unto them, nor adhering to any but me only. Take this also with thee for a certain rule, that nothing maketh a man so free from the love of himself or any other creature, and so far from being entangled with any earthly cogitation as to despise himself and all creatures, and to account of me in his heart as his only precious jewel, esteeming all other things, as they are indeed, as filthy dung.

10. Make a diligent search in all thine actions, studies and desires, what moveth thee unto them, and whether thou speakest or holdest thy peace, whether thou doest somewhat or beest at rest, look narrowly into the innermost corners of thy soul, that

is, into the very marrow of thy cogitations and intentions, and thou shalt often find that the very original root and seed whereof this groweth, which thou thinkest divine, is merely human, impure and a lewd seeking to please thine own appetite.

11. Take heed, therefore, that no vicious thought enter into thee, nor any inordinate lust remain within thee. Oh, if thou hadst thy heart clearly delivered from the love of every creature. Oh, if being wholly converted unto me thou didst desire me only, I would with as great a desire run to meet thee, and enter of mine own accord with as great affection into thy heart, as if I could not live without thee, or that without being with thee I could not enjoy perfect happiness and contentation.

12. This course I know will seem grievous unto thee at the beginning, and it cannot be without some trouble thus straitly to note and observe in all things what thou seekest, what thoughts possess thy heart, and whensoever thou findest any cogitation that is not of me, or for my sake, presently to root it out of thy mind. This, I say, will procure thee great labour find affliction of thy spirit. For thou shalt find both thyself and thine appetite lie lurking in many things wherein thou must of necessity forsake both, and presently mortify any desire that is unlawful

and inordinate in thee. For if thou seekest to overcome thine own nature, it followeth of necessity that thou must do it by violence and forcible means. And, therefore, thou shalt find as many crosses as thou hast wicked or impure inclinations, which must be mortified in thee.

13. But by this means, my Daughter, thou shalt first come to know thyself, for by seeing thine own disability and weakness in that thou canst not overcome thyself, thou shalt be humbled. And whereas before, thou thoughtest thyself to be somewhat, thou shalt then plainly find that thou art nothing. And if thou persistest in this course with continual and incessant labour, that which at the first was painful thou shalt quickly find to be very easy. For this diligent and daily looking into thyself and examining of all thy thoughts, doth work many things in thee very profitable for thy salvation. It will show thee thine infirmity and imperfections, it will breed in thee sorrow for those sins which thou findest in thyself, and an earnest desire to be delivered of them. It will also make thee very careful to beware of many offences, and to avoid many dangers into which otherwise thou wouldst have fallen.

14. To conclude: the labour and distress which thou sustainest, and the toil which

thou takest to be clearly rid of these imperfections, and the tears which thou sheddest—because thou canst not overcome thyself, and clean be without those things which thou wouldst altogether forsake—shall be a baptism unto thee for the purging of thy soul, and for expiation of thine offences. Faint not, therefore, in thy courage, for thou shalt overcome all things by settling thy whole trust in my mercy. Have confidence in me, and thou shalt find that I will make these crosses light for thee, and help thee myself to bear part of the burthen.

CHAPTER XXIX

HOW DIVINE INSPIRATIONS OUGHT TO BE OBSERVED AND THE GRACE OF GOD NOT NEGLECTED

Have care, my Daughter, to abound always with virtuous customs, and to spend thy time in good exercises, that thou mayest use the same as a mean to lift up thy heart unto me when thou feelest no other great or sensible motions of my grace within thee. But thou shouldst never addict thyself so much to thy exercise, as to prefer thine own conceits before my inspirations. For whensoever thou hast learned to know my will—whether it be by the manifestation of the will of thy

superior, or by my providence, by which, of doubtful events, I do sometimes set down a certain judgement—follow that straightway, and forsake thine own appetite.

2. Whensoever also thou findest a sensible and plain motion of me with thee, presently leave thyself and obey me, by following of mine inspirations. For I hold not myself satisfied though thou dost serve me, seek me, and bend thyself to please me, but I will have thee to serve me in such sort as my will is to be served, that is, I will have thee clean to forsake thine own will, yea, although it be in a thing which is virtuous and commendable, to follow my will in another thing which is not half so good, but seemeth to be vile and of no value. For the same thing in respect of my will, that is, because it is my pleasure, my ordinance and my appointment to have it so, is not only not vile and of no value, but very good, yea, and much better also than the other. Thou must, therefore, often omit and alter thine exercises in this sort, not of negligence, not of sloth, not of any inconstancy of thy heart, but of a pure and mere renouncing of thyself, that thou mayest not, in any place or in anything, stand upon thyself, but rely wholly upon me with a firm and full confidence in me.

3. Oh, if thou knewest what great danger and what great loss of spiritual profit is

incurred by not receiving of mine inspirations when I send them, and how damnable it is to resist my divine motions, thy heart would even consume for grief and very fear of my justice. Wherefore, my Daughter, stand always in fear of thine own actions, and suspect thyself ever of unthankfulness towards me. Be ever in doubt that it may so happen unto thee for thy deserts, as it hath happened to many other, that thou mayest for thy pride and ingratitude be justly forsaken of me, and deservedly fall from my grace. Be humble, therefore, always, having no confidence in thyself, but in me. Pray continually for my grace, and observe my inspirations with great heed, that thou mayest know what I require of thee; and it is not only sufficient for thee to know my will, but to do it whensoever thou shalt come to know it, and despising all other things whatsoever, to prefer it before any delight and contentation of thine own. And whereas I warned thee that thou shouldst be afraid for losing of my grace and for being forsaken of me by thine own negligence and ingratitude, thou must have a special care that this fear proceed not of desperation or of weak faith, but of humility, which is ever of fear, full of hope and confidence in me.

4. If thou art not able to imitate the exercises of other men, be not therefore discouraged or dejected in thine own mind.

For thou shouldst not so much respect other men's exercises as their virtues, seeing that I do distribute my gifts to every man according to his constitution by nature, and that particular vocation whereunto I call him, and agreeable to that scope and certain end whereunto I appoint him. I furnish him also with divers exercises, fit for him, which are unfit for many other, and not meet for everybody, because the nature or vocation of particular men—to the which my grace for the most part is accommodated and made agreeable—is different, and many times very contrary. If, therefore, thou canst not follow other men's exercises of virtue, yet thou mayest imitate their virtues, for they be not different, but one and the same in all. As for example, thou mayest be humble, thou mayest be merciful, thou mayest be patient, and thou mayest resemble other men in the very same virtues, though thou canst not imitate them in the very same exercises. For there is but one way to please me, which hath been to all my holy servants ever one, uniform and the same.

5. This is the way of charity, which hath many and sundry exercises of my holy servants, directed to one end, and which thou must walk by whatsoever means I shall appoint unto thee. If thou walkest in this way of charity, that is, if thou follow me, by

receiving of all things as from me, by committing of all things unto me, by humbling thyself under my mighty hand, by yielding thyself unto me, by respecting me only and seeking my glory in all things that either thou dost or speakest, I will not suffer thee to go astray though thou walkest in never so great darkness or ignorance, though thou beest vexed with never so great temptation or distress, and though thou thinkest thyself never so quite forsaken or rejected by me.

6. Have thou, therefore, consideration always of thy vocation or calling, and use exercises agreeable to the same, being ever ready to leave them, change them, discontinue them, and resume them, according as thou shalt be directed by my inspiration, providence and good pleasure. For thou shouldst not measure thy perfections by this or that man's account, nor by thine own estimation. But thou oughtest to measure it by my good pleasure, resigning thyself wholly thereunto, that thou mayest not seek to attain to this or that man's perfection, or to such as thou desirest thyself, but to such as my will is to appoint thee.

7. Let that perfection, therefore, which thou desirest consist either in abundance or scarcity, according to my will and good pleasure. Wish and pray that thou mayest be such a one in my sight, as my special will

is to have thee. Observe diligently, and learn both to know and follow the inspiration of my grace. If thou neither seekest to please thyself in thy natural inclinations, nor in thy spiritual exercises, but respect me only with a pure intention, thou shalt quickly find the way wherein I would have thee to walk, and the course which my desire is thou shouldst always hold.

CHAPTER XXX

HOW WE MUST EMPLOY THE GIFTS OF GOD WHICH WE RECEIVE TO THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

I WILL not have thee, my Daughter, to neglect those graces and gifts which I bestow upon thee. But take heed also that thou dost not seek thine own commendations in these graces of mine, that thou dost not by them ascribe anything to thine own worthiness, that thou beest not puffed up with pride, that thou dost not boast of them, glory in them or desire to please thine own self by them, but employ them all wholly to my glory, remembering ever especially above all things, that of thyself thou art nothing, hast nothing and art able to do nothing. And that whatsoever thou hast, thou hast received from me only.

2. And that I love not to have my gifts return unto me fruitless, and without doing of any good, but with gain and usury, as I have forewarned all men in the parable of talents, which I spake of in the Gospel. For as thine eye in thy body is not an eye only for itself, nor is placed there only for the use and benefit of itself, but to the end that it may help all the rest of the members to see, so, what talents or gifts soever I have bestowed upon thee, I have not given them for thine own self only, that thou shouldst reap the whole fruit and benefit of them to thine own use, but I have placed these gifts or good things in thee for the benefit of other members of my mystical body, that by them thou mayest serve others, help others, and both gain and draw thy neighbours to the knowledge of my will and the doing of my commandments. For peradventure I gave not them those things which I gave thee, because in thee I provided for them and thyself also; as on the contrary part, I have to the same end withholden many graces from thee which I bestowed upon them. For in these things which I bestowed upon others, I had respect unto thee, and gave them not for themselves only, but for thee in them, because I bestowed those graces upon them for thy benefit.

3. I require, therefore, at thy hands, that thou employ my gifts to other men's com-

modity, and helpest other men most willingly by them, as much as lieth in thy power. If thou canst do somewhat which they cannot, that so by this mean, one kind of charity remaining in you all, may make of many of you one body. And whatsoever this body hath in one member, let him employ it to the benefit of the rest. For every member ought to make one another partaker of the gifts which everyone of them receiveth, by reason of the union of the body and communion of charity which is amongst them.

4. Let this consideration of my will make thee, my Daughter, cheerful to serve thy neighbours, glad to bear their burthens, meek to suffer with them, gentle to comfort them, ready to succour them, and willing to rejoice with them, that no envy at all, no contention, no emulation, no seeking to please thine own appetite be found in thee, nor yet that any of these things may appear in thy fellows, but that there may remain between you perfect charity and the communicating of my gifts one with another, as between the members of one body. For thou hast nothing that is thine own. For what hast thou that thou hast not received? Wherefore, thou hast nothing, as I have said, that is not mine, thou hast nothing that is given to thyself alone, that is, thou hast nothing that is given thee for thyself only,

but all things whatsoever thou hast received are committed to thy custody to be altogether employed for the benefit of the whole body of my Church; and look unto it, for I will require an account at thy hands, how thou hast bestowed the same.

5. Take heed, therefore, that thou be never carried away with so profound a contemplation, or think thyself so well and so perfectly contented in being with me, but that, if either the corporal or spiritual necessity of thy neighbour do call thee away from it, thou be ready to forsake thine own consolation, the pleasure of thine own devotion, yea, and the sweet exercise or matter wherewith the consolation itself is nourished, and, neglecting wholly to please thyself, be willing to run in haste to help thy neighbour for my sake. For this is perfect charity, not to seek thine own, but thy neighbour's benefit. And this charity is more acceptable unto me, and more profitable for thyself than all the contemplation or devotion that thou canst use of thine own.

6. Moreover, remember always that in all thy actions, in all thy affections, and in all those things which either thou dost or makest choice of, or sufferest or seekest to avoid, I may be thy beginning, thy middle and thy end, that whatsoever thou dost or leavest undone may be for my sake, and that

in the following of this course thou seekest no other thing but only my glory and the fulfilling of my pleasure. For the deed is not so acceptable to me, in respect of itself, when thou dost succour or takest compassion upon thy neighbour; but thou art, in doing hereof, most acceptable in my sight, because thou dost, for my sake, leave thyself; that is, because thou forsakest thine own commodity and seekest to relieve thy neighbour's necessity. For if thou dost anything for any other respect, whether it be of kindred or familiarity, or for any gain or recompense which thou lookest to receive, I accept not of it, but reject it, although it be never so great and worthy an act. For I accept of no sacrifice that is offered up unto me if it be not offered for my sake, only and wholly.

CHAPTER XXXI

OF POVERTY IN SPIRIT

Do with all zeal and earnestness as many good works as thou art able, hungering and thirsting after justice. And let no man seem unto thee more weak and imperfect, more void of all virtues, and more unworthy of my grace, than thyself. Fix thine eyes always upon thine own defects, bewailing and

lamenting that thou hast so many imperfections, and wantest so many virtues. But remember withal, that it is not thy duty to think and look into other men's manners, what virtues they have, what ways they walk, and how they behave themselves towards me.

2. I know what I have given everybody; I know also what account is fit for me to require at everybody's hand. Imagine thyself in thine own eyes the basest, vilest and wickedest of all men, and, as it were, merely nothing. Be ashamed in my presence, if thou hearest any man praise thee or show a good conceit of thee, and be sorry for it because by it they do me injury, in that they think well of thee which art so vile a soul, so unclean, so unthankful and so full of offences against me.

3. Think thyself so vile, as that every man may lawfully and with just cause, contemn and despise thee, and that thou mayest not think thyself injured, or else wronged at any time whensoever any seek to lay reproaches or afflictions upon thee. For thou oughtest to receive commendations or reproaches with an equal contentment in thy mind, and without any difference but only in accounting thyself altogether unworthy of commendation, and most worthy of reproach. For as long as thou thinkest thyself to be wronged, as

long as thou complainest and dost believe that thou hast received any injury, thou art not clearly purged of self-love. For thou shouldst not, in truth, take anything for an injury but that wrong which is done unto me.

4. Submit thyself, therefore, so wholly to my will and pleasure, as thou mayest be as well content with evil as with good, with grief as with joy, which by an external accident doth happen to thee in this world, remaining always poor internally in thy spirit, hungering and thirsting, as I said, after justice, and having a heart free from all earthly cogitations, and ready with all zeal and earnestness ever to do those things which agree best with my good pleasure.

CHAPTER XXXII

OF THE LOVE OF GOD

O MY Daughter, even as the hart desireth to come unto the fountains of water, so let thy soul have desire to come unto me, and thy mind be inflamed with the love and desire of me. He that is oppressed with a vehement thirst can think of nothing but of drink only; for whatsoever he doth, his burning thirst never forsaketh him, but still provoketh

him with earnest cogitations and continual desires to have some drink.

2. In like sort, if thou didst love me perfectly, if thou didst long for me vehemently, thou couldst think of nothing else but how thou mightest come unto me, how thou mightest be united unto me; there would always remain in thee such a hunger and thirst after justice, that thou wouldst never be satisfied or contented with that which thou hast done to mine honour, how great soever it were, but ever grieved and perplexed in thy mind with thinking that the same which thou hast done already for mine honour was nothing at all. Thou wouldst always endeavour thyself to do better, thou wouldst always thirst to be more perfect, thy heart would ever burn with desire to be more nearly united unto me, to honour me more, and more fully to fulfil my will and good pleasure.

3. They which are inflamed with an exceeding and an unmeasurable love towards any man or woman, do loathe meat, drink and all other things which seem either for delights to please them or for necessary use to sustain their body, and pine away and grow sickly if they cannot enjoy their desire, or if they find and perceive that they are not loved again. For they languish with mere love, and that maketh them that they can

neither take any joy, nor receive any comfort, nor find any rest except they may obtain that which they love.

4. O my Daughter, thou oughtest to love me in this sort, that thou mightest find in me only joy and consolation, and without me in all places nothing but sorrow and affliction. If thou didst rightly love me as thou shouldst do, thou couldst not be in rest until thou didst possess me. For there would a continual thirst, hunger and desire burn within thy soul, not permitting thee to enjoy any quiet at all. Oh that thou didst languish with such a kind of love towards me, or that, hating all other things, thou didst desire me only.

5. Oh that thou didst present thy heart unto me quite weaned and clearly delivered from all other love whatsoever, that I might still draw it after me, and both pierce it through and wound it to the bottom with my love. Oh how happy shouldst thou be if, being made quite besides thyself and drunk with extremity of love towards me, thou didst despise all things else, thou didst loathe all my creatures and didst run only after me crying unto me: I am wounded with thy charity. Thou oughtest, my Daughter, to be inflamed with so fervent an affection towards me, as whosoever did come near unto thee might perceive no other thing else,

but only the heat of thine affection towards me breathing out of thee; and whosoever did talk with thee might depart edified from thee and warmed with the flames of that affection towards me which he found kindled in thy soul.

6. If, therefore, thou desirest to love me, thou must love me with thy whole heart. I will not allow that thou shouldst love me and join with me anything else besides me, that is, that thou shouldst not love anything for any other respect but for my sake only. I look to be loved purely, and that thou canst never do but when thou lovest me for mine own self; that I only, and no other respect whatsoever, be the cause why thou lovest me. I will also be loved with an infinite love and with an unmeasurable desire; for thou shouldst never find in thy soul any end or measure in loving me, but although thou didst love me never so much, thou shouldst always desire to love me more. For my love is not restrained within any limits, but it is infinite and without any bounds. It never thinketh itself satisfied, it can never be filled or contented with any quantity; though it be never so exceeding great, it will every day grow and increase to be more. For charity doth always increase, and what is charity but a good will?

7. As, therefore, a good will cannot be restrained within any limit, and as it is without all end, so is charity likewise. I know that thou hast a will to love me with all thy heart, and that thou desirest to love me as much thyself alone as all my holy servants do, joining all their love together. This desire is good if it proceed not from an appetite of desiring, in respect that thou wouldst be more excellent than they and singular above them all, as though thou only couldst love me as much as all they, when all their love were put together. It is a good desire, I say, if it springeth from pure and perfect charity only, and that thou dost for my own sake, without any other respect, desire me, love me, and wish still to increase in the love of me, and seek to love me as much alone as it is possible for all other being joined together. Have care, therefore, that this desire of thine proceed not of any appetite to be preferred before others, but only because charity can never be satisfied or filled, and that the greatness thereof maketh thee to think that how much soever thou lovest me, is much inferior in thine eyes to that affection which thou dost desire to carry towards me, and in no sort either answerable or agreeable to thy desire.

8. My love is no idle love, but it worketh great things where it is indeed. And where

there is no desire but an unaptness and unwillingness to do good works, there is no love without all doubt. And yet, notwithstanding this, if thou wantest ability to do good works, be not therefore discouraged, my Daughter, or dejected in thy mind, for thy good-will pleaseth me as much as if the work were done, and is as acceptable in my sight. I will not require an account of thee for that I have not bestowed upon thee. For it is not the multitude of works, but the greatness of love which delighteth me. Many good works, if they be presented unto me without charity, do pacify me no whit at all. For what is chaff to me without wheat? To whomsoever thou dost offer wheat, which is love, offer him also chaff, which is works.

9. For although I regard not works without love, yet I will have a good regard of thy love without works, for as thou be hindered by disability, necessity, obedience, or any other lawful impediment, in such sort as thou art not able to do good works. For then, as I have said, I accept of thy good-will. But where power wanteth not, if love remain, it doth extend itself and exercise itself towards me, and for my sake, towards her neighbour. For I have placed him as a companion with thee in my stead that whatsoever thou wouldst bestow upon me, and

cannot, thou mayest bestow upon him. And that thou mayest do it the more willingly, I have promised that I will accept as well at thy hands, and reward as largely, anything that thou dost towards thy neighbour as if thou hadst done it to myself. For if thou hast charity, it worketh so in thee, as thou lovest him for my sake, thou beholdest me in him, thou servest me in him, thou dost me benefits in him, thou dost bear and suffer with me in him, and if he offend thee, thou dost forgive him for my sake.

10. And for this cause I gave him unto thee in my stead, that thou mayest bestow these good turns upon him as time and place serveth, and as thou hast opportunity offered by me to do the same. For thou must not forget that which I repeated before, how charity is not to be measured or esteemed by the multitude of works, but by the greatness and sincerity of thy affection, that is, by the inward devotion of thy mind joined with a pure, chaste and internal disposition, inclination, and intention of thy will, which, the more ready, prompt, fervent and desirous it is to obey me, honour me, and please me, and the more that she renounceth her own self in seeking to please me purely without any other respect, and to prefer me before all other creatures, the more she is drawn to

love me, and the brighter she doth shine in all good works.

11. Oh, if the children of men did know how much it pleaseth me to dwell in such a soul, how gladly I do offer myself unto her which desireth me only, how bountifully I do pour myself into such a heart as doth seek me only with a pure intention, being withdrawn and free both from the love of herself and of any other creature besides, desiring me fervently, respecting me wholly, staying for me patiently and refusing to be comforted with any other thing but with me only. Nay, such a heart as I speak of will not desire to be comforted by me, because she thinketh herself unworthy to receive any consolation from me, but desireth only to be satisfied with having my good-will and pleasure fulfilled in her. For she only desireth to do, to suffer and to be in no other sort than agreeth with my pleasure; and then, although such a heart neither desireth comfort nor anything else, which is without me, yet I do reward and enrich her with all blessings and benefits.

12. For there can be nothing wanting in any creature, neither can there be anything forsaken for the love of me, that is so good but that there shall be found in me things instead of them a hundred times better, purer, sweeter, pleasanter, and more delight-

ful than they were. For whether it be beauty, sweetness, pleasantness, delight, love, truth, consolation, the continual enjoying of such things as men do like, riches, glory, power, and innumerable other things of the same sort, which either may bring delights to them or procure desire to them; all these things are after an infinite manner, more excellent and more perfect in me than in any creature whatsoever.

13. O my Daughter, the smallest consolation which thou feelest by the presence of my goodness in thy soul doth surmount all the delights of the world and the pleasures that can be taken in any creature whatsoever. Yea, all other delights being compared with it, do seem bitter and unpleasant. Wherefore, if things were measured by a true and just account, it could not be but that men would love me better than themselves or any other creature. But now—it is a lamentable thing to be spoken—men do leave me which am their greatest good; they despise my goodness. Nay, which is more, they forsake their own true and only happiness and fall to love themselves, to delight in the world from whence all disquietness of mind and all other mischiefs do proceed.

14. Alas, why are miserable men so far deceived? If they delight in love, why love they not me whose love is chaste, pure,

holy and simple; which am an object always offered to their eyes of infinite amiableness, being essentially good in myself, being a pure good, unmixed, being the chiefest and sovereign good, where the reward of love also is unspeakable delight and most blessed eternity? Whereas the love of the world, on the contrary part, doth breed nothing in thy soul but unquietness, bitterness, distraction, repentance and heaviness. Leave thou, therefore, and contemn all worldly things and desire me only, being united unto me with all thy soul, with all thy heart and with all thy will. For as long as thou dost addict thyself to the love of creatures, thou shalt find that which is in creatures: that is, thou shalt be defiled and disquieted with corrupt and unclean delights, and yet, besides that, be never satisfied or contented. And thou shalt also be polluted with impure imaginations, and be distracted with sundry cogitations that are lewd and wicked. But I do recollect that heart which seeketh to be joined with me, and I unite it fast unto me, procuring in it by my means all peace, quietness and all tranquillity of conscience.

15. Thou oughtest continually to entreat me, and without ceasing to pray unto me that thou mayest after this sort forsake the world, renounce the love of all my creatures, and be wholly converted unto me, and

inwardly dedicated in thy soul to my service. For no man can bestow this grace on thee, neither canst thou obtain it by any other mean but by me only. Wherefore, thou must always with great regard observe the internal inspirations of my grace, thou must follow my counsel, obey my exhortations and commit thyself altogether to my providence. My inspirations do never disagree from the Holy Scripture, nor from the obedience which thou must carry to thy superiors. Therefore, if thou submittest thyself unto them, and reliest in no respect upon thine own self, thou art sure to walk in all simplicity and purity of heart.

16. Love is an incomparable treasure, and therefore I should be the storehouse of the same, and it should never be laid up but in me only. O my Daughter, where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also. If, then, thou wilt know what thou lovest, mark what thou dost oftenest think upon, what thou dost with greatest delight and willingness hearken unto, what thou dost most fervently desire, what thou dost inwardly in thine own appetite most seek and bend thyself unto; for that is, without all doubt, thy treasure, and therein thou findest sweetest rest, most quiet, and greatest contentation. And both of them is thy treasure, both the thing which thou lovest and the

love wherewith thou lovest the same. But see into how great misery, how great unthankfulness and how great infelicity men do fall by this means; for they do purchase to themselves hell fire with the expense of incomparable treasure, which is love. For if men contemning me, fall to love corrupt, unclean and frail things, such as will quickly perish, they do with the same love which they bestow upon them procure unto themselves eternal torment. Let all my friends, therefore, bewail and lament this strange and unnatural kind of dealing, that I am clean thrust out of the heart of man, for whom I offered up myself in sacrifice, and whose salvation I did buy with my precious blood, and that another which is mine enemy doth possess it and doth possess it only to this end, that he may draw them with him into eternal destruction, into endless misery, and into unquenchable fire.

CHAPTER XXXIII

OF THE PRAISE OF GOD

Be always inflamed, my Daughter, with a desire to praise me, to love me, to honour me, and to please me from the bottom of thy heart altogether, and by all the means that

thou art able, and in such most perfect sort as I require at thy hands. Carry always in thy heart so great a reverence, so great a fear, so great a care, so great a love and affection towards me and for me, as thou mayest never do anything to displease or offend me. And although it ought to be thy greatest care, thy chiefest fear, and thy special labour, not to do anything thyself, or to give any occasion by thine own negligence that anything should be done to offend me, yet, nevertheless, thou oughtest also to take as much care as lieth in thee for others, that I be not by them dishonoured or offended, or that they do break my will and commandment. And thou oughtest to do this with a pure intention of mere charity, for my sake, without any other respect.

2. For there should ever abound in thy heart a most faithful, fervent, and devout love of me, which should continually flow with forcible streams every day nearer and nearer towards me, and it should carry thee with so great violence and run over in such exceeding abundance, as it should make thee most ready and desirous to do all things that may be for my glory, and for the fulfilling of my pleasure; and it should possess thee in such sort as thou shouldst desire nothing so much as to be clearly delivered, quite discharged and altogether weaned from all

love, respect, desire, or inclination towards thyself, or any of my creatures, and to keep thyself in the same state pure, clean, chaste and unspotted to me only, desiring me with a pure intention and no other thing, that by this mean I may have my will without any impediment, freely and wholly fulfilled in thee and by thee, and that I only may possess thee, and that there may be no space or division between thee and me, but that thou mayest be close united unto me, having renounced and forsaken all love, both of thyself and any other creature.

3. Desire likewise that my will may be done in all things and with all men, and that all men may know me, love me, honour me, worship me, and serve me. Thou wouldst rather choose to suffer ten deaths—if thou wert a faithful spouse unto me—than once to consent to any sin, although it were but venial. For albeit it is not likely that thou canst long stand in perfection without venial sin, yet thou must not in any wise, willingly or of set purpose, yield to any venial sin, but thou must ever be fully resolved in thine own will never to sin again. And thou must fix and settle this will of thine, in the hope of my grace, and not upon any confidence in thine own ability.

4. I do ever please and delight him that loveth me, and all my works and judgements

seem sweet and pleasant to him, and he never ceaseth to praise me for them. He that loveth me need not study to find somewhat for which he might praise me, for the love which he beareth me will show unto him what may or ought to be praised in me. And to praise me is no other thing but, by loving me, to think upon me, and by thinking upon me, to honour me, and by honouring of me, to wonder at my works, and by wondering at my works, to desire that all men should extol, magnify and love me. My praise doth lighten his heart which loveth me with a pure affection, it doth rejoice his spirit, it driveth away all heaviness from him, and withal it is a safe protection for him both in prosperity and adversity.

5. Whosoever spendeth his time in praising of me, it maketh him with all fortitude of mind to contemn all the mischief that the subtlety of man or the devil can practise against him. Oh how delightful a thing it is to my angels to hear the sweet songs of them which do continually praise me—although it be much more delightful unto them to assist their pure hearts, and to help them in setting forth of my praise—for they see men upon earth do imitate by this mean the order of the celestial companies in heaven, as though they had received here the earnest-penny, or else some sensible feeling of eternal

happiness, which is only a continual praising and magnifying of my name. For there is nothing that doth so lively resemble the state of the blessed happiness in the world to come, as the cheerful and delightful voice of those which do praise my name.

6. And touching myself, I am of so great majesty and omnipotency, as I stand in need of no praise, and no praise can make me more glorious than I am already; neither is any creature able to praise and magnify me as I do deserve. Wherefore, thou oughtest to think thyself most unworthy to praise me. Nevertheless, desire yet to praise me, that thou mayest know and it may appear manifest unto thee, how that all human praise is nothing in respect of my worthiness, and how I am far greater than all the praise that can be given me, and how all creatures, when they have praised me as much as they are able, have done it much inferior to that I am worthy of, and therefore must yield that they are altogether insufficient to praise me. And, although that I declare unto thee how that every creature must give this praise to me, yet I would have thee especially to imprint this lesson in thy mind, that although thou dost endeavour never so much to praise me, which thou oughtest at all times to do with all thy force, yet thou shouldst think that thou hadst done nothing at all.

7. I will tell thee, my Daughter, what kind of praise doth please me: vocal praise. Although I would have thee always to use it, and with thy voice to perform it, whensoever thou art commanded by the precept of my Church to say or sing anything, yet I must needs tell thee that it doth not please me so much as that internal praise which consisteth in the spirit. A profound contemplation and perfect knowledge of thine own baseness, a consideration of thine own weakness, how thou art of thyself merely nothing, and a modest shame procured by the mean of thy unworthiness before my majesty, is a most sweet-smelling sacrifice, and a most delightful praise unto me. Because thou shalt be brought by it with a shamefaced kind of modesty continually to look into and to despise, in my glorious presence, thine own vileness, deformedness, unthankfulness, wretchedness and misery, and be also moved to acknowledge how thou art of thyself merely nothing, and therefore be desirous to humble and subject thyself before me and every one of my creatures, and to be willing or rather to wish to be, in respect of thine own baseness, contemned and trodden under of them all. Such a contrite and humbled heart I can never despise; yea, the sorrowful groans of such a heart is a much sweeter and worthier

sacrifice unto me than a huge heap of many words and a tedious multitude of vocal prayers only.

8. Moreover, thou dost then likewise truly and rightly praise me when I am as acceptable unto thee for sending adversity as prosperity, and when thou givest me as many thanks and remainest as devoutly and zealously affected towards me in thine own will, for the one as for the other. It is also not the least praise that thou mayest yield me, to beware of sin, to take great pains in seeking after virtue, to thirst for the honouring and extolling of my name, and to seek only for the fulfilling of my pleasure and the setting forth of my glory. Besides this, it is a much purer kind of praise, and more acceptable unto me than any vocal praise, to keep thy heart undefiled, pure, and free from all vicious affections, from all slothful humours, from all heaviness, unwillingness and frowardness in thy soul, and to cleave unto me only, in all peace, tranquillity, and silence of thy spirit.

9. What motion soever thou feelest within thee, my Daughter, what outward accident soever doth happen unto thee, presently repair unto me with thy heart wholly converted and submitted unto my will, and wish that it may be turned by my grace to my greatest glory and highest praise. By doing

after this sort, all things that happen unto thee shall be for the furtherance of thy salvation, and even nature itself by this virtuous custom shall be changed into grace. Wherefore, if thou findest within thyself any mischievous attempt of the devil, any filthy temptations or horrible blasphemies, or dost sensibly perceive in thy soul the motion of any odious temptation whatsoever, endeavour thou to win some profit or benefit to thy soul by the same mean whereby thine enemy seeketh to do thee a mischief, and account it a benefit for thy soul if it may bring thee to praise and glorify me.

10. As soon, therefore, as thou feelest any of these temptations, come presently unto me and say: O Lord my God, as often as I feel this temptation, as often as it cometh into my mind, so often do I glorify thee with the praises of the whole court of heaven, and so often do I adore thee, to the confusion of this wicked spirit which assaulteth me, and to the honour and glory of thy name. And in his place I offer unto thee infinite praises which he is not able to do. If it be a grievous temptation which thou feelest, say: O most merciful God, although it be very troublesome which I suffer, yet I will willingly endure it for the love of thee only, and for thy honour; and if it may be to thy greater honour that I should suffer greater and

more grievous temptations than this is, behold, I offer myself ready with all my heart to do it. Let nothing, O merciful God, seem so troublesome unto me, but that I may desire above all things to sustain anything that may be for the glory of thy name.

11. If thou feelest any cogitation in thy soul of beautiful, delightful, or precious things, say: O most sweet God, this proceedeth from thee, which art most goodly, most beautiful, most sweet, most to be desired, and most worthy to be embraced, because thou art the greatest good. If it be thy pleasure, I will willingly want all thy creatures, I will willingly forsake all consolation that thou alone mayest remain in my heart and mayest wholly possess me, which art most beautiful and far more beautiful than all the fairest things besides thee; which art most sweet and far more sweet than all the best and sweetest things besides thee; which art most to be desired and above all to be beloved, because thou art far more amiable and precious than all most precious and most amiable things besides thee.

12. Likewise, if thou either hearest or seest any number assembled together, or as often as thou beholdest any exceeding beautiful thing or multitude of people, say so often in the day to thyself: O most goodly and amiable Lord, O Almighty and eternal

God, let thousand thousands of the armies of celestial spirits praise thee out of me, and let ten thousand hundred thousand of those that stand before thee extol and magnify thy name out of me and for me; and let all the worthy supplications of thy blessed saints make intercession unto thee for me, and let the beauty of every one of thy creatures, and the sweet harmony of them altogether glorify thee out of me for ever, and world without end.

CHAPTER XXXIV

OF THE EXERCISE OF THE LOVE AND PRAISE OF GOD

If thou dost desire to love and praise me with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy force, and with all the ability that doth rest in thee, and desirest to persevere in the loving of me to the end, thou must of necessity have some exercises of love, whereby thou mayest nourish it, kindle it, increase and maintain it. And for this cause, keep thy mind free, withdrawn, weaned, and clearly delivered from the love of my creatures, and from all internal occupation of thy mind or business about them, and from all care and trouble of this present world, by lifting it up unto me with continual, vehement, and

scalding sighs, and inflamed prayers, burning with all zeal, and by aspiring incessantly with most fervent desire to come unto me; that is to say, by desiring to love me most ardently, most perfectly, most vehemently, most faithfully, and withal continually; yea, and thirsting also to please me with all zeal, with all fidelity, and with all the sufficiency that is in thy power, and to fulfil my will absolutely and perfectly in all things.

2. To conclude, thou must always have a desire to see me, who am most beautiful; to possess me who am most blessed; and to be with me, who am only able to grant thee happiness, being the Fountain from whom all felicity doth proceed, in whom all sweetness doth consist, and by whom all goodness must be granted. For I am of all things the sweetest, the best, and the happiest, yea, true happiness itself. Cleave, therefore, always to me and be never separated from me. Have ever somewhat in thy mind which thou mayest meditate upon, and which may inflame thee with the love of me, whereby thou mayest think of my sweetness and goodness, and, by wondering at it, magnify and praise my name. Or else, on the contrary part, meditate upon somewhat which may move thee to bewail, lament, accuse, and reprehend thyself for thy vileness, baseness, weakness, infirmity, inconstancy, or unthankfulness; or

else that may procure thee suffering, even with sorrow in thy soul, from the bottom of thy heart, with those that be afflicted and dead, to make supplications unto me for them, and for my universal Church. Moreover, whatsoever thou art to do, or what thing soever thou hast to think or consider of, think of them first with me, receive counsel touching them first from me, and discourse of them first with me, that thou mayest be brought by this custom always, and at all times, whether thou beest alone or in the company of others, to talk with me, and to keep thy heart still lifted up unto me, either by prayer or else by praising of my name.

3. Do whatsoever belongeth to my honour; whatsoever thou knowest will content me or is my will, that thou shouldst perform with an unspeakable thirst to please me, and with an insatiable desire to honour me; and labour thus by all the means thou mayest, and endeavour with thy help, with thy counsel, with thy travail, and by all the other means that do lie in thy power to advance my glory, that my name may be praised both by thyself and others, and that my will may be fulfilled in all my creatures. But in the meantime, notwithstanding, while thy outward man is thus occupied abroad, let thy inward man remain quietly with me; for thou must in no wise give thyself so

much to external business, as that thy mind should be distracted and run wandering after sundry cogitations, and that thou shouldst draw by this mean into thy soul many fond imaginations and vain fancies. But rather, whilst thy outward man is busied, be thou recollected in thy spirit, and gathered close together in thy soul, that it being united unto me, thou mayest ever internally remain with me.

4. And when thou hast learned this lesson, when thou hast accustomed thyself to this course, no external business shall hinder thee, no external act shall hurt or withhold thee, especially if it be a good and modest one, from the mental exercise of the love of me. But thou shalt speak unto me, or rather be in thy soul peaceably united unto me, as well at that time as at any other, so long as thou dost not, as I have said, entangle thy mind with thinking of vain and transitory things, nor remainest drowned in the cogitations of those external businesses which thou practisest in this world. For as long as thou hast a will to keep thy heart free from the love of all creatures, there is no creature that can win or withdraw thee from me, although in thy outward man thou be troubled with never so many businesses, nor occupied with never so many actions, if thou imprintest not the forms, the representations, the love

or delight of these things internally in thy mind.

5. Wherefore, never complain that external good works are an impediment unto thee in thy loving of me, or in the exercise of thy love towards me. For these things do not hinder thee, as thou dost imagine and conceive in thy mind, but thy inordinate affection, thy want of discretion, thy infirmity and thy evil inclination are those things which do hinder thee, because thou hast not as yet fully mortified them all; for these do make thee not only outwardly, but also inwardly busied and occupied with thinking of my creatures. Moreover, thy mind being more and more distracted, divided, and made more wandering by the multitude of these conceits, is far from being able to cleave unto me, nay, it cannot continue constant or quiet within itself. But be, notwithstanding, no whit discouraged, if, in respect of brotherly charity or of showing of thine obedience, thou art enforced sometime to be occupied and disquieted in thine inward man for my sake. For I can quickly amend whereinsoever thou hast faulted for my sake, and repair it again, with such advantage and gain unto thee, that thou shalt be afterwards so much the nearer and with greater delight united unto me, as thou didst think thyself before further estranged from me.

6. But if thou find thy mind so much distracted and alienated from me, as thou canst neither recollect it again nor yet return and lift it up unto me, think not that it wandered thus in respect of that charity which thou didst show merely for my sake; but that thine own wicked inclination hath polluted thee, and that there was somewhat hidden within thee which moved thee to this, whereof I was neither the author nor occasion, neither yet was it in any way procured by my mean. Thou wert not belike, circumspect and watchful enough, and therefore, thou didst suffer some human infirmity. But remain not long estranged or alienated from me, for I am always ready to receive thee again into my favour.

7. Let thy mind, therefore, be ever occupied in holy desires, that no moment may pass thee wherein thou dost not wound me and seek to pierce my heart with the fiery darts of thy inflamed desires. Be assured, my Daughter, that thou canst desire nothing at my hands in vain. For if thou dost desire me thou shalt find me; but if I do withdraw and hide myself from thee for a time, I do it for thy sake and thy benefit. For I cannot choose but grant my presence to those that call upon me and desire me. I do stir up these desires in thee, I inspire thy heart with these motions, and, therefore, be sure that

I will also hearken to thy petitions and hear thy prayers. For although it should so fall out by the means of my providence, as thou shouldst remain unheard of me to the hour of thy death, yet it is impossible that I should not at all hear a devout prayer, but I will even at that instant render thee an hundredfold for thy long forbearing. Thou shalt then perceive that I will give thee for one petition a thousand; thou shalt then find that thou art heard at my hands, when thou canst never again lose the benefit thereof.

8. But in all thy prayers, let this be thy chiefest petition, to desire at my hands that thou mayest possess me. For what is more holy, what is more for my glory, than to desire me above all things, and before all things? Pray, therefore, always for a naked and only a pure, a most chaste, a most perfect, a most earnest, a most watchful, and a most faithful charity towards me, whereby both thyself, and all other reasonable creatures may cleave unto me with a resolute mind and with such a firm intention, as no accident whatsoever shall be ever able to withdraw you from me.

CHAPTER XXXV

OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF A MAN

If thou wilt obtain me wholly, O soul, thou must of necessity altogether forsake thyself and altogether cast off thyself. Thou must submit and resign over thyself to extreme poverty and the want of all temporal commodities and consolations for obtaining of me, who am the chiefest and greatest good. Comfort thyself, therefore, and be not dismayed though thou be deprived of all human consolation, and though thou want all human friendship, favour, and succour whatsoever.

2. Consider how a stout soldier, not regarding his friends, his country, his wife, his children, his quiet rest and his commodity at home, doth forsake them all, and being a stranger in a foreign land, doth there daily offer his life to dangerous labours, to painful journeys, to continual watching, and to sundry miseries and perils, that he may obtain riches and win honour. In this sort must thou, forsaking all things, be spoiled and made poor, and deprived of all comfort, and of all my creatures whatsoever, that nothing may remain in thee wherein thou mayest find any quiet, that thou mayest possess, but me only. Moreover, thou must

exclude and banish from thyself the forms, impressions, and memory of all things, and thou must cleanse and purge thy mind of them all, and carry about with thee the image of me only, imprinted in thy heart whereso-ever thou becomest, and howsoever thou art, either alone by thyself or in company of others.

3. Thou must also, whether thou eatest or drinkest, sleepest or wakest, speakest or be silent, always look into me as a pure glass and most perfect pattern for thee to imitate, that thou mayest direct thy course of life and transform thyself according to the virtues and manner of my life. If thou eatest, dip every morsel in my wounds. If thou drink-est, take the warm blood out of my wounds which will breathe charity into thee. If thou speakest, look upon me which heareth thy words, and beware that thou speakest nothing that is uncomely or may displease me. If thou holdest thy peace, hearken unto me which do speak to thee, and search out with all diligence and care what is my perfect will and good pleasure. If thou sleepest, lean and repose thyself upon my heart, applying thy mouth to the gaping wound of my sacred heart, and suck my grace thereby into thy spirit, and breathe again into me, by sending a sweet-smelling sacrifice out of it, the marrow and precious treasure of thy heart.

4. To be short, wheresoever thou be, govern and direct thyself according to that most notable, most worthy, and most perfect pattern which thou beholdest in the course of my life. Look into and desire earnestly, with all zeal and affection, to imitate my most modest and most lowly humility, my most courteous affability, my most sweet meekness, my most stout patience, my most pure chastity, my most abundant piety, my most faithful providence, my most merciful compassion, and my most fervent-burning, exceeding and incomprehensible charity. Imprint the lively image of these things in thy soul, fill thy mind wholly with it, and by the means thereof, banish altogether from thy mind all the forms and imaginations of all other things whatsoever. I will not have thee to be without the impression or the representation of something in thy heart, neither yet will I have thee seek before thy time to fly higher than this.

5. Wherefore, rest thou quietly in the mean space in beholding the image of my humanity and passion, until I do raise thee up to a higher dignity where thou shalt not feel these motions, but be wholly and clearly delivered from any impression or imagination, and be free from all exercise and action, and remain in all peace and quietness, having clean forsaken thyself and thine own appetite.

In the meantime, therefore, meditate how I am always present with thee, and how I do look and pierce into the closest corners of thy soul and into the deepest secrets of thy heart. And do not only meditate upon it, but learn also to have a sensible feeling of my presence whereby I do always behold thee, always mark thee, always look into thee and always both fully know thee and perfectly understand thy greatest secrets.

6. Learn to conceive how I am without all limitation, not possible to be circumscribed within any bounds; how I am an eternal, an unchangeable, an unspeakable and an incomprehensible light; how I am best worthy to be beloved; how I only deserve to be desired; and how I am wholly pure and sincere, not stained with the least evil or smallest imperfection. Likewise, how I am wholly good, in whom there is nothing but it is to be beloved and able to delight all that seek me; how I am wholly most faithful, wholly most merciful, and always ready most abundantly to communicate myself with the children of men. To conclude, learn to know how I am a most constant and faithful lover, a most sweet comforter, a most mighty protector, and a most rich and bountiful rewarder of all those that hope in me, and how I am able to bring more delight unto their soul than all other

things that can be desired. For I never procure loathsomeness in them but I satisfy all their desires, and by satisfying them I daily more and more increase their desires in them. Let this perfect image of me wholly possess thy mind, and imprint it so deeply therein that thou mayest not consent in thy will to the meditation of any other fancies, but presently banish them from thee as soon as they begin to enter into thee.

7. Take heed that thou do not receive them within thy soul, but being free from them, remain united to me only in all internal solitariness, in all internal quietness and in all internal peace and tranquillity, waiting for me continually most desirously and without ceasing that thou mayest repose thyself in all things upon me, that thou mayest follow me, and that thou mayest submit thyself unto anything whatsoever that I will have thee either to do or suffer, yea, unto whatsoever I will have done in thee or with thee. Thou oughtest so clearly to renounce thyself, that is, all love of thyself, and all proper inclination to follow thine own will, as that nothing may be able to move thy reasonable and intellectual soul, being now, as it were, quite alienated and separated from thy body. And that it may seem all one unto her, whether her external or sensible man be praised or discommended, be

afflicted or comforted, and that she may look upon him, as it were, afar off, being clean divided from him, and wholly united and joined unto me.

8. To obtain this separation of thyself from the following of thine own appetite and the love of any creature, thou must of necessity, as I warned thee before, have great watch over thyself, and straitly observe by what mean thou mayest soonest find out and discern what lieth hidden in thy secret thoughts, what moveth thee, what draweth thee, what enticeth thee, what possesseth thee, what reigneth in thee; to conclude, what thou lovest or inclinest thyself unto, whether it be thyself, or any other creature, or me. And thou must thrust presently out of thy mind whatsoever thou findest there, if it be not myself or anything whereof I am not the cause; for thou art then become subject to that thing which possesseth thee, when it hath gotten a full interest and propriety in thee.

9. And I, for mine own part, will never consent to be beloved with a companion, but I look for thy whole love, and I desire to remain alone peaceably in thee. Therefore, except thou seekest me only, thou shalt never perfectly find me, and if thou wilt enjoy me, banish all creatures from thee, suffer no division, no impediment, no separation to

remain between thee and me. Let all creatures be banished from thee but only such as are for thy mere and necessary use; let them have no interest or place in thee; let them not possess thy heart that thou mayest keep thyself free and pure unto me from them all, and mayest wholly submit thyself unto me and be ready to be disposed in all such sort as it shall be my pleasure.

10. Whatsoever shall happen, it is enough for thee that thou knowest it, and findest that it hath happened. Trouble thyself no further with thinking of it, neither suffer it to stay within thee or to leave any memory or impression thereof in thy soul, but rely upon me, and commit all thy cares unto me. Pass and fly over the multitude, the variety and the mutability of these cogitations, and never fix or settle thy heart but in me only. Seek, therefore, me only, and no more but me, in all things, which am one in all, and all in all, and wait patiently with long-suffering till thou findest me; yea, be content to stay and wait for me again and again, and never be weary of waiting till thou findest me, reposing thyself upon my goodness, and upon my most wise providence, full of all love towards thee, with a strong faith and an assured trust therein. When I stay my coming expect me patiently, for I will come at the last without doubt. Be free and

altogether weaned in this sort, O soul, from all thine own desires; be separated wholly from all love and delights in creatures; be alienated from all fancies and imaginations, and cleave wholly unto me in simplicity and nakedness of heart. Offer thyself to be possessed by me, and forsake clean thine own will, that thou mayest rejoice with me in all eternity where there are neither things past nor things to come, but all things are ever present.

11. Aspire always and earnestly desire to obtain this even now, and forsake both thyself and all other things, that is, thy body and sensuality, and have thine eye so fixed upon eternity in this present world as if thou wert quite separated from it, and clearly delivered out of it, beholding all things in this world afar off, as those things which thou hast wholly forsaken, and from which thou hast clearly weaned thyself. Think that thou art alone with me, and that I am with thee, and as if there were no other creature present with thee. Whatsoever thou feelest besides me, make no account of it, because it is in truth nothing worth, being without me; and no creature shall hurt thee as long as thou receive not within thy heart the fancies and imaginations of anything, nor yet feel any cares or affections within thy soul.

THE CONCLUSION

12. I deliver these exhortations unto thee, as to my daughter and spouse, O soul, and as a rule to instruct thee how thou shouldst put off the old man and walk hereafter in newness of spirit, and how thou shouldst daily bend and endeavour thyself, with all thy force, to grow to more perfection. Therefore, as often as by reading over these things thou findest that thou hast not observed all in such sort as I have commanded thee, or that thou hast faulted in some little part thereof, so often still renew thy good intention, by stirring up a new fervour of zeal in thee. And although I give thee these to read, yet I desire notwithstanding, that the ears of thy heart should always be open to my inspirations, whereby thou mayest not only outwardly read them, but inwardly hear these lessons from me.

13. And the reason why I would have these my written inspirations laid before thine eyes is because thou art for the most part delighted with vain letters and messages from thy friends, which do procure in thy heart nothing but distraction, an unsavoury kind of disquiet, and a perilous kind of darkness. Therefore, when thou hast contemned these vanities and forsaken them quite, I have

given thee these wholesome instructions, that thou mightest have some good thing from me to read and to occupy thy mind withal, and that thou mightest by the consideration of them, and for the love of me, despise all other things which seek to pollute thy heart. And the more that I, who am thy Spouse, and gave thee these lessons, O soul, ought to be beloved, the more acceptable ought this instruction to be unto thee which proceeded from me that am not only worthy to be beloved, but most worthy of all things to be beloved, and deserve above all things most to be desired, yea, and ought before all things most to please and delight thee.

14. I would have thee also the more faithfully to observe these precepts, seeing all these things which I have delivered unto thee are not to delight a carnal and worldly heart but a spiritual, and such a one as is devout towards me, and seeing they do not please the ears with picked phrases and trifling words, but they feed the loving soul with truth and wholesome counsel. It semaineth only now to warn thee that thou be watchful and diligent, for I stand at the door of thy heart and knock. Open thy heart, therefore, unto me, O my sister. O my spouse, give me thy heart, and desire me only, seeing I do so much desire thee. But

assure thyself of this one thing, thou canst never receive me as long as thou lovest anything besides me. Thou canst never have me as long as thou hast anything of thyself without me. Thou canst never enjoy me as long as thou possessest thyself. Go, therefore, out of thyself and forsake thyself, that I only may possess thee and that thou only mayest possess me. This is a short time which is present, but that which followeth is without all limitation of time and eternal, without any end.

15. Be watchful, therefore, my Daughter. I do once again exhort thee; receive me for thy husband, O soul, O daughter, O spouse, and show thyself in all purity, without all hypocrisy or dissimulation, a spouse worthy of me. Love me which am thy Lord and Redeemer, think of me, take heed to thyself, have consideration of thine estate.

Cleave unto me and persevere with me
to the end.
Live happily henceforth in me,
and so I bid thee
farewell.

THE INSTRUCTIONS

that follow are very fit and profitable for all men. They are divided into two Rules, and may either be called Rules of Direction for Man's Life, or else, The Fraternity of the Disciples of Christ, that is to say, of such as desire to imitate the life of Christ, and seek to live after the rule of the Gospel, and do study with all their endeavour to attain to the perfection of charity.

JESUS CHRIST which was made man for your sakes did preach unto the world in times past, and did deliver them one rule of life by my Gospel for the salvation of them all; he that believeth it can never err, and he that observeth it can never perish. For it only is sufficient alone for the salvation of man's soul, being well observed; and it instructeth a man fully in all virtue and perfection.

2. Wherefore, if men did live after that rule there were no need of the rules of monks; there were no need of any fraternities or associations and companies of men that live under one rule and order; there were no need of any canons whatsoever, seeing that they which did live purely and sincerely after the rules of my Gospel needed no other thing to instruct them in all perfection. But after that men forsook the rule of my Gospel and every man did only think upon his own proper commodity according to the nature

of men, it came then to pass, not without my counsel and the direction of my spirit, that many of my saints did devise sundry means whereby they might root out of men's minds the love of the world and of themselves, which made them quite forsake me and grow cold in the zeal of my Gospel and my honour, and besides, that they might restore unto the world a perfect course of life, how to observe my Gospel and commandments.

3. Therefore, many of them have set down certain rules, how to keep under and cut off those passions whereby any occasion is taken to break the law of my Gospel, and have commanded that those things should be straitly observed which do stir up, purify, and strengthen the spirit in all virtue and goodness. For they knew that the spirit could never be strong and have the upper hand of the flesh but by punishing it and by flying all occasions of evil. For when the spirit is strengthened there will be always in you a chaster, a ferventer, and a more constant love or devotion to keep my commandments. And it is evident that these holy servants of mine for this cause had a will to appoint all things in such sort as might be for the furtherance of men in following the course of my Gospel, and would not permit the smallest tittle that might be against the rule thereof.

4. It appeareth manifestly also that some which lived after them added new constitutions and many ceremonies to these rules, and do more severely and sharply punish men for their transgression of these ceremonies than of my Gospel, which is a very preposterous course and contrary to all good order. For a man is reprehended and punished, if he speak out of time, if he sing out of tune, or if he offend in any of these ceremonies. But I had rather, although I allow of these, that there should not be smaller but much greater care had of Evangelical precepts than of these ceremonies, and that there should be a sharper censure against those that break my commandment than against such as offend in these ceremonies. As for example, I would not have them go unpunished which swear by my name, which backbite anybody, which hate their neighbours, or do any such thing as my Gospel doth forbid. For there must needs be appointed sharper discipline, and there must always be severer laws ordained and appointed to punish those which do break my commandments; and for the observation hereof, the ancient Fathers in times heretofore did prescribe sundry rules. But what shall I say? I see that you in these days do neither observe my Gospel nor yet the rules of the ancient Fathers. You boast of

my words in your mouth, and of my Gospel in your common talk, but it appeareth manifestly how far I am from your heart, seeing you do not love me nor my commandments.

5. Return you, therefore, now, although it be late, who have walked so long in crooked paths, with your hearts unto me. Do penance and believe in my Gospel; and do not only believe whatsoever my Gospel teacheth, but by believing it and loving it, do whatsoever it commandeth. If you will be Christians, if you will be my disciples, imitate me, learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart; walk ye as I have walked. Moreover, if you will be monks, if you will be priests, or if you will be religious men, do those things which are of the spirit, and mortify by the spirit the works of the flesh. If you be, as you say, Evangelical and followers of my Gospel, do those things which my Gospel doth command you. How long will you say unto me, Lord, Lord, and will not do those things which I say? Do those things which I command you, and show yourselves to be my friends, not in words only, but in deed and in truth, for he that heareth my words, he that hath my commandments and doeth them, this is he that loveth me.

6. And for the stirring up again of that fervent zeal which hath been heretofore in

men's minds, and for renewing the observance of my Gospel which is almost worn out of use, I deliver now unto those which are my friends and devoutly affected towards me, two very short rules. Whereof the one is very fit for such as be less perfect and but new beginners in the following of my service. And the other for such as are more perfect and desire with all earnestness to attain to a most chaste love of me. Wherein there is taught no heap of ceremonies or multitude of prayers, but a reformation of the conscience and inward man, and a devotion of the mind. There is nothing entreated of touching the colour or fashion of garments, but the desires and endeavours of men are stirred up to the honouring and following of Evangelical obedience. And there is one kind of fraternity made and set down in this place, whereby the minds of many may be united in one, and the intents of all such agree in one, as do love and serve me. No man is here of necessity bound to vow the observation of those things—although that a vow doth very much adorn, strengthen, and enrich a good will—neither yet doth it make a man, if men offend therein, further guilty of a fault than the transgression of my law doth pronounce him.

7. But I do give a law to all those that desire to serve me, agreeable to every man's

ability, and I do temper it in such sort as every man, being assisted by my grace, may keep and fulfil it. For my will is that all men should be saved, and I have furthered them by my help unto it, so far as it was my good will and pleasure. And in this respect I do often forbear sinners, and wink at their infirmities that are weak, lest I should break asunder a broken reed, or should extinguish or altogether put out smoking wood. And, therefore, being desirous to gather together unto me all those that serve me, I have divided them into two kinds. In the first, I place those that be weak and new beginners; and in the second, those that be more perfect and long practised in my service; and I have set down such precepts for them both as I have chosen out of my Gospel, and are most agreeable to their state and vocation.

AN INSTRUCTION

or Rule for such as be weak and imperfect, and but new beginners in my service.

WHOSOEVER will vow himself to be one of my soldiers and to fight in my warfare, and give me his promise in that behalf, if he cannot at the beginning beware of all sins, yet let him specially beware of mortal sins. If thou, therefore, desirest to be accounted in

the number of my faithful servants, beware of sin, and cut off and fly all occasions of sinning. Eschew evil, and do good, for I will never enter into a malicious soul, neither will I dwell in a body subject to sin.

2. Never spare thy life or temporal goods if it may either deliver or preserve thy neighbour's soul from mortal sin. For thou oughtest to esteem more, any soul whatsoever—for the salvation whereof I gave my life—than thy body or temporal goods; and I ought to be more precious in thine eyes, for whose honour thou dost it, than thy corporal or temporal life. Never give thy consent therefore to any sin, but specially to mortal sin, whether it be in thyself or another. Whatsoever thou wouldst not have done to thyself do not unto another. Use no fraud, practise no deceit, do no injury. And if these things be offered thee, bear them with silence for my sake, or at the least, complain no otherwise of them than justly and after a just and rightful manner. For I have commanded my servants to prosecute that justly which is just.

3. Never requite evil with evil, nor reproach with reproach, never repay wrong with wrong, but suffer all for the love of me, who, when I was railed on, did not rail again; when I suffered, did not threaten mine enemies, but did willingly submit myself

to an unjust sentence. Do thou, therefore, in like sort. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Thou oughtest to love thine enemy, and to do good to those that hate thee, that thou mayest be the son of thy Father that is in heaven, which doth good not only to those that are good, but to the evil also. Be merciful as thy Father in heaven is merciful; give alms to thy neighbour if thou hast ability, or bestow daily at the least one benefit or other upon him, or some good turn, or some service, or some work of mercy, or some deed of charity.

4. And thou oughtest faithfully to exercise thyself in this exercise, in taking of compassion or succouring of thy neighbour. For whosoever is merciful towards another shall obtain mercy at my hands, and whosoever shall do anything to the least of my servants, whether it be good or evil, I will account it as done unto myself. If thou livest according to the flesh thou shalt die, but if thou dost mortify the works of the flesh with the spirit, thou shalt live. Mortify, therefore, thy desires, thy senses and thy members here upon earth, that thou mayest not do whatsoever thy carnal appetite doth provoke thee unto. Thou shouldst every day, at the least no less than once withdraw, restrain and deny thy consent for my sake,

to something which thou desirest or wherein thou delightest. And if there happen nothing that day wherein thou mayest bridle thine affection in this sort, yet do it for the love of me as occasion is offered, in barring thyself from having, feeling, seeing or hearing somewhat which thou much desirest, or to which thy concupiscence and the curiosity of thy nature doth move thee. And although there is no other fruit to be reaped by it, yet deny thine own will in this point, and kill this desire in thee for love of me. Thou must never swear but being forced by lawful authority for a matter of truth before a judge; thou must never speak of my name in vain, or unprofitably, or make a lie at any time.

5. Either read or hear Mass every day if thy state or office will permit thee; and do it in the memory and honour of my charity, and of all my benefits which I have heretofore most abundantly and willingly poured upon men, and do daily from time to time bestow upon them. But if thou canst not hear Mass, say with the same intention the prayer which I taught my disciples, and the salutation of the Angel to my blessed Mother; and offer me up to my Father in thy heart, and with me all those good works which I and my servants either do or have done for thee and the universal Church.

6. Thou oughtest every month once at least, sacramentally to confess thy sins, and to receive the Sacrament of my blessed Body: at the feast of my Nativity and Resurrection, at Pentecost also, and at the Assumption of my Mother, and at the feast of All Saints, except living under some vow or in some monastery, thou be restrained there by thy rule of life to do the same.* Thou oughtest to adore me every day early in the morning, being One God in Trinity of Persons, and to recommend thyself to my protection, and to pray that I would defend thee and all the world from sin. He that is so simple as he cannot perform this, let him read with a devout intention a *Pater noster* and an *Ave Maria.*

* *Cf.* Decree of S. C. of Council, *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, December 20, 1905. 1. Frequent and daily communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and the Catholic Church, is to be freely permitted to all the faithful of whatever rank and condition; so that no one who is in a state of grace and approaches the Holy Table with a right and good intention may be prohibited therefrom. . . .

2 If there be any Institutes whether under solemn or simple vows, in whose Rules or Constitutions or Calendars on certain days communion is fixed or ordained, these rules are to be regarded as merely directive and not as preceptive. And the prescribed number of communions should be held as the minimum for the piety of the Religious. . . .

7. When thou hast no better mental exercises, by internal meditation and by somewhat that may kindle a more fervent zeal in thee, say every day in the honour of my Passion and my Wounds, five *Pater nosters* and so many *Ave Marias*. Moreover, say every week in the veneration and honour of my Mother a hundred and fifty *Ave Marias*, that is, three Rosaries, every Rosary containing it itself fifty.

8. Make also every day in the veneration and honour of the sacrament of my blessed body, two low curtsies, reverences or adorations. One to give me thanks for that charity and benefits which I showed towards thee in my Incarnation, Death and Passion, and in the institution of this blessed Sacrament. Another to give me as much honour as lieth in thee, in recompense of that reproach which I suffered at their hands that receive my precious body unworthily and do handle it impurely. Thou must every day make two other adorations or curtsies, one to obtain the fruit which I, dying, procured for all men by my passion and by the effusion of my blood and loss of my life, and which I have a will that all men should be partakers of.

9. Thou must in this also pray that I may pour my grace so into the heart of every man, as they may receive the same virtue, efficacy,

and fruit of my passion which, being upon the cross and suffering there, I wrought for them and in such abundant sort as I by my death did offer it unto them. Thou must make another kind of curtsey or some kind of humiliation of thyself in my presence to praise me and give me thanks for the effusion of my blood, and for all my mercies which I have at any time poured out, both upon the good and bad; and thou must pray for their conversion who are in damnable sins, and for the reformation of the Church. They that cannot conceive thus much, let them say with a devout intention, two *Pater nosters*, and two *Ave Marias*.

10. Thou must fast every Friday, if infirmity, weakness, labour, necessity, travel, age or some other reasonable occasion do not let or hinder thee.* Or if it like thee better, thou mayest eat twice that day, so that it be temperately and very sparingly, and that thou usest no sodden meat at supper; whereby thou mayest punish thy flesh at the least a little, and bring thyself to bewail the bitterness of my death and passion. Learn diligently to know the com-

* Such, it must be remembered, was the general law of the Church when this was written, a law which remained in force in England down to the times of Bishop Challoner. See *Life and Times of Bishop Challoner* (Burton), vol. i, p. 132.

mandments of the Gospel and the precepts of my Church, and when thou hast learned them, do not break them for the love of any earthly thing whatsoever.

ANOTHER INSTRUCTION

or Rule for such as with a more fervent zeal and spirit do earnestly labour to attain to perfection.

I HAVE placed those in this second division which, forgetting clean all things that are past, desire ever to come to a better and more perfect course. And, therefore, this rule shall be for such as, seeking to attain to true perfection, do covet with a longing mind to be made one with me and wholly united to me.

2. Wherefore, whosoever thou be that desirest to serve me with thy whole heart, and to please me in all things, thou must not with thy certain knowledge and deliberate judgement offend in any sin, although it be but venial. And thou must desire instantly at my hands with most humble and devout prayers, that I may keep and preserve thee from all kind of sin. Thou must be holy as I am holy; thou must be perfect as I am perfect; thou must be holy, I say, in my sight, and when thou art so, thou must remember that it is not of thyself but it

proceedeth from me. Thou must not think otherwise of thyself than of a most wicked sinner that had infinite times deserved eternal damnation, if my most benevolent and ever most ready mercy had not been always at hand to preserve and deliver thee from it.

3. Walk in that vocation whereunto thou art called, and live according to the state and rule of thy vocation. Observe diligently and perform faithfully whatsoever my Holy Scripture commandeth thee, and whatsoever thou promisest with thy mouth unto me. It is also thy duty not only to enquire after my commandments, but to seek to know my pleasure in all things, and to ask my counsel, and even with a certain desire to follow and fulfil them both.

4. Lead a solitary life, being separated from all unnecessary businesses, from familiarity and discourses with men, and give thyself to silence, solitariness and prayer as much as thy state will permit thee. My Apostle saith that the servant of God ought not to be contentious; contend thou not therefore in words. Abstain also from every idle word, but chiefly from all carnal and backbiting speeches. Never speak anything, nor yet hear anything, of those which be absent but that which is good. And although that it may sometime be done with

a good intention to speak evil of him that is absent, yet never consent to speak or to hear evil of him, except the matter which is spoken of be most certain and apparent. And yet, if thou dost exceed in this, thou must not go away unpunished, but thou must enjoin some penance and punishment to thyself for thine offence.

5. Observe sobriety in meat and drink, and use all my creatures with temperance, that thou mayest be made poor in spirit with the love of me, delighting in no worldly thing whatsoever, but as a stranger and wayfaring man. Look upon all things in this world with a pure and free heart, not subject in any way unto them, but as it were passing lightly by them, not having any desire to remain with them.

6. Accustom thyself to show all humility, meekness, benignity and piety towards thy neighbours, remembering and beholding me in every man, and frame thyself to deal so with them as thou wouldst deal with me. For in truth, I take anything whatsoever thou dost to thy neighbour as done unto myself.

7. Thou oughtest to judge no man, nor yet intrude thyself to dispute or to give thy judgement of other men's matters and consciences whatsoever they be, except thou beest appointed a judge by me, and so by the virtue of thine office art to give thy

judgement therein. And yet, notwithstanding, if thou shalt see any man offend and dost hope to do him some good by thine admonition, or at the least hast no mistrust to make him commit more grievous sins by thy reprehension, thou mayest courteously admonish him who doth sin, earnestly and gently entreating him, that he would be mindful of his own salvation and amend his fault. But if he seek to defend himself and obstinately contend with thee in maintaining of his doing, do not thou dispute with him except thou have hope by little and little to bring him to a better course; neither yet labour to defend thine own speech when it is to no purpose, but give him place humbly, without any anger and with all meekness and quietness.

8. Likewise, if thou be reprehended at any time without a cause, thou mayest, if thou wilt, gently and mildly give an account of thy dealing. But thou shalt do better, except any scandal might arise thereby, if thou dost humbly ask pardon, and without any excusing of thyself, promise amendment —as far as thou mayest lawfully do without offending of me—and withal thou mayest give him thanks to show thy charity, which did in this sort admonish thee.

9. I have heretofore warned men in my Gospel, that if any man will come after

me he must deny himself. For as in the denying of a man's self the whole perfection of a man's life consisteth, so by the love of a man's self he cometh ever to ruin and destruction. Labour, therefore, by all the means that thou mayest for the utter denying of thyself, and let it be thy principal study how to mortify thine own will in thee. Thou must so dispose of all thine own matters as thou mayest be ready either to do or omit things in such sort as thou shalt be counselled and advised by some good man or one that feareth God, if thou hast not a spiritual governor.

10. Trust not thine own judgement in anything. Do nothing of thine own head, chiefly in doubtful things where there may be danger. And, therefore, thou must not procure for thyself anything in seeking to please thine own appetite except such things only as do manifestly appear without all doubt to be acceptable unto me, but thou must rather respect the profit of many, and thou must ever prefer before all things my honour, and commit thyself wholly to my providence. I will take care of thee, I will take the charge upon myself to provide for thee; and let this be thine only study, to behave thyself in such sort as thou do nothing to the derogation of my honour and the resisting of my good pleasure.

11. But to the end that thy work may be more pleasing unto me by the denying of thyself, if thou livest not in the monastical course of life, thou mayest for the undertaking and performance of this course promise thy obedience herein to a priest or some other man that feareth me. Neither ought the infelicity of this present age nor the impiety of wicked men which do slander and impugn vows and promises made unto God, yea, even such as are most profitable for man's salvation, either move or discourage thee any whit. But thou oughtest to be the rather induced by this to rely thyself upon my mercy and firmly to believe that I, which have given thee an inspiration to have a will to do well and to make a holy vow, will also give thee power and ability to fulfil it. For neither of them proceed from thyself, but it cometh from my grace both to have a will to do well and to do well indeed, and both to promise and perform those things which are profitable for thy salvation.

12. Choose a place that is secret and desire to live hid and unknown, and disclose not thy counsels to everybody but to him only who is the director and guide of thy conscience. Be not careful or desirous to please men, seek not for their commendation or to have a name amongst them, neither yet study to do anything whereby thou mayest

obtain a great opinion, praise or admiration amongst them, seeing that all things are proper to me only, to which any praise or commendation is due. But endeavour rather so to bridle thine affections as that thou mayest in all simplicity and purity of heart, think worse and more basely of thyself than of any other, and be desirous that other men should conceive the like opinion of thee. So as whatsoever thou dost, whether it be a thing worthy of commendation, or else such a thing as may make thee to be contemned and reproached of others, be no more moved with it, if it be not sin, either inwardly in thy mind or outwardly in thy show by entering into any passion than thou wouldst be if any other man had done the same.

13. Boast nothing of thyself, glory nothing in thyself, challenge and ascribe nothing to thyself, by the mean of my gifts attribute no more to thyself for any virtue that is in thee, or for any good works that are done by thy means, than thou wouldst do to a hatchet or any other instrument, which is nothing at all in itself, and is able to do nothing by itself, but if anything be done by it, it is by the will of the artificer which worketh with it, and which could do the same by another instrument if it pleased him. For in that it is come to be an instrument

and that it hath anything in itself whereby it may now be employed to some use, it hath not this ability of itself nor from any other, but from the artificer, which did frame it in such sort as it may work and do somewhat. But without an artificer, or one to work with it, it lieth still unprofitable and serveth to no purpose.

14. In like sort must he think of himself which desireth to be my son and to imitate my humility and will undertake to follow this rule of life. He must consider of his own estate how full he is of miseries, defects, sins and infirmities. Moreover, he ought to look into every man and respect those things only in them wherein I have adorned them with any grace and virtue, that he may be brought by this consideration to acknowledge himself always inferior unto them all. And let him not challenge or ascribe anything unto himself for those virtues, operations and good gifts which I bestow upon him; but let him make no other account of them than if they were in another, and let him give the praise and glory of them all unto me wholly, without challenging of anything to himself thereby.

15. And, therefore, thou which desirest to be a follower of this rule must have great care of thyself, and thou must so diligently look into thine own behaviour and be so

watchful in all thine actions as thou neither mayest seek anything nor bend thyself to desire or follow anything besides me, that is, thou must desire nothing but my glory and the fulfilling of my pleasure only. Wherefore, in what thing soever thou findest thyself to bear rule, that is, in what thing soever thou seekest to please thyself or findest self-love to reign in thee, there thou must renounce thyself and omit wholly the doing of that thing, if thou hast no lawful impediment to the contrary, seeing by it thou didst not seek to please me with a pure intention.

16. Thou must complain to no man of those crosses which thou sufferest, except it be to have counsel at their hands. For thou oughtest to receive all things thankfully which I send thee and to refer all things unto me. Therefore, howsoever the storms of affliction shall violently assail thee, or in what sort soever adversity shall chance to overwhelm thee, have thou a mind ever ready to endure all patiently, being wholly subject to me and for me, to all creatures. Endeavour with violence to repress these motions which rise up against thee and labour clean to forsake thyself, and be not moved with any passion against men, neither yet contend, dispute or resist them.

17. Seek not, moreover, means to avoid afflictions, nor to deliver thyself from them,

and be content to receive all things with silence, in peace and tranquillity, and with an indifferent mind, as willing to receive adversity as prosperity at my hands. And be content to bear them with all quietness in thy soul as long as it shall be my pleasure. And when thou art in adversity do not seek with a deliberate intention, that is, of set purpose, for any consolation, though it be never so little, but commit all things unto me, and patiently expect the event and end of all things from my hands.

18. Thou must confess thy sins sacramentally to a priest every week no less than once. But thou must do it to me every day in prayer, and that very often, with the sorrow of thy heart, and with a humble accusation of thyself for thy manifold offences; and thou must offer thyself unto me ready in all things to set forth my glory and to fulfil my pleasure.

19. Thou must receive also the Sacrament of my blessed Body every month once at the least, if thou canst not every week once or twice; and thou must not omit to make those curtsies which I set down in the former rule in the veneration of my glorious Sacrament, and in the memory of my death. If thou shalt fail in any of these things heretofore recited, thou shalt not thereby be guilty of a new fault by undertaking the perform-

ance of this rule, neither shalt thou offend more by the mean of it than another which liveth without this rule and fraternity. But for every transgression which thou makest by being overcome with thine own inconstancy, do not cease altogether from following this good purpose of thine, but enjoin thyself for thy penance and punishment to say one *Ave Maria* or some greater penance, as thou shalt think convenient. Thou must say every night, notwithstanding, three *Ave Marias* before my most holy and glorious Mother. One for those negligences which thou hast ignorantly committed, and which thou dost not remember. Another, to entreat me by her intercession for the amendment of thy life, perseverance in virtue and obtaining of my grace. The third, that the worshipping and honouring of me may be daily amplified, enlarged, augmented and increased, either by this rule or by what other means soever that shall seem best unto me.

20. Use such spiritual exercises as are most agreeable to thy devotion, state and nature, wherein thou mayest spend thy time profitably and be lifted by them in thy heart unto me, increasing daily in goodness and enforcing thyself from time to time to do better and better. He that will undertake to follow this fraternity or rule and govern himself according to the prescript order

thereof, let him kneel before the image of me crucified, if he be alone or had rather be secret by himself, and let him earnestly entreat me that I will vouchsafe to receive him for my disciple, that I will pour my grace upon him, and both strengthen and confirm this good-will in him so fully, as he may resolve constantly and unremovably to live according to these rules and directions. Let him also teach others and gain souls unto me and bring them unto my service. But if there be many that undertake to follow these rules,* they may exhort one another in me and may be united in brotherly charity by the mean of the likeness and unity they have in their course of life, in that they all do follow this fraternity. And let them not receive every man at all adventures into their society, especially such as there is no hope of the constancy of their mind and perseverance of devotion, lest that their lightness and instability, which do not endeavour to attain to the perfection of that course they have undertaken, may discourage others in their good purpose and make them give over their holy intention.

* Following the Latin more closely this sentence reads: But if in a monastery or town there be many to take up this plan, they may exhort one another in me, and may hold meetings, not as cutting themselves off from others, but united by charity and by their common purpose. And let them not, etc. . . .

A VERY SHORT EXERCISE

of love unto God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, the most blessed Trinity and one true God, wherewith a man ought once every day to offer himself with his whole soul unto his divine Majesty, and to give him most humble thanks for all benefits which he hath received at his most gracious hands.

O LORD my God, which art infinite goodness itself and both unchangeable and unspotted according to all the perfections which I can conceive of thee, always remaining the very same that thou wert from the beginning; thou madest every creature for thy glory, thou dost preserve and govern them with such wisdom that, being so many, so great and so divers as they are, there is none which doth withdraw himself from being under thy subjection, and yet thou dost neither dig nor labour but always remainest in most blessed quiet. Thou hast created me according to thine own image and likeness and dost preserve me in that being which I am. Thou hast redeemed me of most pure charity by the death of thy most blessed Son, and in most painful and troublesome manner, that thou mightest show unto me the riches of thy grace, the bounty of thy mercy and the exceedingness of thy love towards me. Thou hast made me to come in a noble sort to the

acknowledging of thy most holy name, thou hast brought me to that most holy religion, and hast raised me to so high a dignity. Thou hast directed me always in thine own presence and hast carried a special regard towards me, and thou hast made me to find favour in the eyes of thy servants that they might take care of my salvation.

2. Thou hast delivered me also from many dangers and tribulations both of body and soul, from infirmities, from sicknesses, from beggary, from fallings headlong, from sundry perils, from wicked men, from drowning and from infinite other mischiefs which might have happened to me as well as to others, if thy love and mercy had not delivered me from them. Thou hast also most often delivered me from sin, from falling into the gulf of sinners, from being devoured by them, and from eternal damnation. Thou hast, moreover, given me a firm confidence to believe that thou hast chosen me to eternal happiness, wherein thou wilt manifest thine own self unto me. Oh, I shall then plainly know and see thee, my Lord and God; I shall love thee perfectly and most purely; I shall find most blessed peace in enjoying thee only; and I shall always most sincerely praise and glorify thee with all thy saints. O merciful God, confirm this and perform this quickly in me. O Lord, my God, for all the benefits that thou

hast wrought and shalt work in me and in every one of thy creatures, be all honour, glory, thanks, dutiful service, hearty affection, chaste fear and sincere love to thy divine Majesty, world without end. *Amen.*

3. O merciful God, make me thankful and pardon me, I beseech thee, most graciously, for all those abominable ingratitudes, intolerable negligences and innumerable sins which I have committed against thee—*and if thou hast communicated thou mayest add to this and say*—for thine own sake, and by the virtue of thy blessed Sacrament which I have received, root out of my heart all malice, grant me a humble confession, a hearty sorrow, a discreet abhorring, a zealous forsaking and a necessary detestation of all my sins, and both true repentance and a perfect amendment in this life. Grant, also, that I may never again offend thee, for thine unspeakable mercy and infinite goodness, and make me to love with all the affection that is possible for me thy most sweet friendship and thy most precious grace. Excite me most earnestly to desire it and quickly to find it with perseverance therein even to the end. O merciful God, grant that I may not neglect this goodness and long-suffering of thine. Strengthen me always both in soul and body to do thee service, and grant me thy grace that I may soberly

use thy creatures to the glory and praise of thy name.

4. I give thee thanks, O Lord Jesu, and thee O Holy Ghost, being equal with the Eternal Father, which wert content for my salvation to be conceived of the same Holy Ghost and to be born of the most pure Virgin Mary, and to be made man. What do I owe thee, and how much am I bound unto thee, O Lord Jesu? O God who wert man; O man who wert God; O Messias; O Christ, the anointed of our Lord; O Emmanuel, O God with us; O Lord of exceeding Majesty and most constant Lover of men, how wert thou made a mortal man subject to a mortal life, to sheddings of thy blood, to persecutions, to sorrow, to pains, and chiefly to the torments of the Cross, when thou wert made poor and miserable and most vile and contemptible in the sight of all men. What shall I render unto thee, O sweet Lover, for that most bitter death which thou sufferedst for me, and for that unspeakable charity which thou showedst towards me?

5. I beseech thee, O Lord Jesu, by thy Incarnation, by thy remaining in the Virgin's womb; by the joy of thy soul at the grace of thy union, when thy divinity and humanity were joined in one; by thy Nativity in winter-time, by the pain of thy Circumcision; by the veneration wherewith the Sages did

adore thee; by thy Presentation in the Temple; by thy Flight into *Egypt,* by thy banishment there; by thy fearful return again into thine own country; by thy subjection, obedience, and most virtuous life; by the penance which thou didst for our sins; by thy baptism, fasting and temptation in the wilderness; by thy penury, poverty and necessity which thou enduredst in this mortal life; by all the troubles which thou feltest; by thy most gracious virtues and glorious life; by that ingratitude which thou didst endure at the Jews' hands when they would have thrown thee down headlong from the top of the hill; when they sought traitorously to entrap thee in thy words and deeds and when they did devise how to stone thee with their violent hands.

6. I beseech thee, also, by thy modesty, humility, patience, meekness and all thy other virtues; by the humiliation of thyself at thy disciples' feet when thou washedst them; by the institution of the most blessed Sacrament of thy precious Body, and by the most delightful taste and unspeakable sweetness thereof; by thy sadness, agony and bloody sweat which thou didst endure when thou prayedst in the garden; by thy being forsaken of thy disciples and all men; by thy being betrayed by thine own servant; by the bands, reproaches, injuries, buffets, blows,

spitting upon and blasphemies which thou didst suffer; by the false accusation and unjust condemnation which thou receivedst; by thy grief for *S Peter's* denying thee, *Judas'* betraying thee, and the other disciples' forsaking thee; by thy being led unto divers judges to receive the sentence of death; by the mockery, nakedness, scourging of thy body, crowning of thy head and vexing of thine innocent soul; by thy being rejected when *Barabbas* was accepted; by the unjust sentence of the judge; by thy being led with thieves; by the carrying of thy cross; by the mockery of thine adversaries and by the shamefulness of thy death; by the lamentation which devout persons, but chiefly thy Mother, made for thee; by the toil and weariness which thou sustainedst; by the bitter drink which thou tastedst; by the plucking of thy flesh with the plucking of thy garments which thou enduredst; by thy being stretched out on the cross; by the nailing to the cross and the torments which thou there receivedst; by those blessed tears which thou didst shed; by those intolerable injuries which thou didst patiently bear; by thy most holy prayer; by the commiseration which thou tookest of the thief that said, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

7. By the compassion of thy Mother; by thy crying out thou wert forsaken; by thy

drinking of vinegar and gall; by thy saying all was finished; by thy most cruel death; by thy unspeakable charity wherewith thou sufferedst it; by the piercing of thy side, thy Mother looking on; by thy holy burial; by the heaviness of thy friends for thy death; by thy Resurrection, by thy appearing to them again; by thy Ascension; by the sending of the Holy Ghost, by the institution and foundation of thy Church; by the Assumption of thy Mother; by the glorification of thy saints; by thy last judgement and by the eternal salvation which thou wilt grant to thy servants' souls and bodies. Thou didst rise again from death triumphantly, thou didst appear to thy disciples gloriously, thou didst rejoice their hearts wonderfully, thou didst ascend up into heaven in their sight miraculously, thou didst send the Holy Ghost to direct thy Church, thou didst gather up thy servants unto thee, thou didst assume thy blessed Mother to thy eternal kingdom, thou shalt come to judge the quick and the dead, thou shalt reign with all thy saints world without end; and let me remain with thee, O sweet JESU.

8. What shall I render unto thee, O gracious Lover, for that most bitter death which thou sufferedst for me and for that unspeakable charity which thou showedst towards me? O good Jesu, make me, I

beseech thee, partaker of all thy merits and mercies, make me thankful for them and in recompense of them to love thee again who loved me so much, and even to be ready to die for thy love. Pardon me for all mine unworthiness, all my vileness, all my undutifulness and all my negligences wherein I have offended thee. Teach me true wisdom, that thou only mayest be wisdom unto me, and all other things whatsoever, foolishness. Grant that I may never use any kind of concupiscence. Grant me true knowledge, pure intentions, holy purposes, and perfect discretion in my conscience and in thy holy service. Make me stout and forward to show myself such a one in the sight of thy glorious Majesty as becometh me. Encourage me and strengthen me against all faintness of heart, errors, scrupulosities, fancies and such like.

9. Open my understanding in judging truly of the Scriptures and conceiving rightly of thy good pleasure, that I may know what is acceptable in thy sight, and when I do know it, grant that I may both love and perform it. Deliver me from taking any care for other men's causes, or busying myself with other men's matters, that by this mean I may more wholly please thee and more perfectly, safely and quickly come unto thee. And if it shall please thy most excellent

Majesty to work this in me, thy will be done; and help me, I beseech thee, that I may be a profitable member in all offices touching thy service, and neglect nothing that may express my duty towards thee. Make me like unto thee both in life and manners. Grant me modesty, humility, obedience, patience, and whatsoever else is necessary for my vocation.

10. O most gracious and loving Lord, quicken me and revive me with thy grace, separate me wholly from all evil and convert me altogether unto thyself, and grant that I may hate that thou hatest and love that thou lovest. Make me to increase continually and abundantly in all virtues. Strengthen me and confirm me in thy Catholic Faith, truly understood. Increase faith in me, settle and fortify in me an assured hope, grant me always to conceive rightly of thee and to rely wholly upon thee. Give me a firm confidence in thee and that I may worship thee devoutly, honour thee chastely, and love thee perfectly with a simple heart, a pure soul, a quiet mind and a safe conscience. Grant that thou only mayest content me, that thou only mayest delight me, and that thou only mayest possess me, and that I may desire thee only, love thee only and study how to please thee only. Make me that I may never be separated from thee, that I may labour earnestly to come unto thee, find

peace in thee alone and quickly come unto thee. Let all inordinate love be clean mortified in me, and remove all other impediments from me that may hinder me to come unto thee, who art only to be desired and only beloved.

11. I do confess thee, O Lord my God, three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and I do adore and worship thee, one true God as thou art in thyself, submitting and subjecting myself wholly and irrevocably to thy most glorious Majesty, as all creatures are bound to do, lying prostrate at thy feet to yield themselves in everything unto thee, readily with all good-will, perfectly with all obedience, and truly with all sincerity.

12. Forgive me, O most merciful God, that I have not carried that affection towards thee which I ought, and grant me thy grace that I may worship thee, reverence and love thee in truth and in such perfection as I am bound.

A PRAYER

for him that is ready to celebrate or communicate.

O Lord Jesu, I intend to celebrate or communicate in the memory of thy most sweet coming by which thou, being our Creator, wert made our Redeemer. O most holy

Saviour, I would I were in the number of them whom thou of thy piety dost join unto thyself, whom thou dost of thine infinite mercy succour and whom thou dost of thine unspeakable goodness relieve. O most merciful, most gentle and most gracious Saviour, O most faithful Lover, O Emmanuel, O God with us, O Son of the Virgin Mary, full of all graces, flowing in all good gifts and abounding in all virtues, I beseech thee by that most singular grace, that is to say, by the joy of thy heart when thy divinity and humanity was united, by the sweet meekness of thy mind, by the obedience and love to thy Father, by thy charity and affection which thou didst show to all mankind in general, and to me a wretched sinner in particular, by undertaking our most wicked cause and suffering the pains due unto us with unspeakable joy and desire, that thou mightest restore unto thy Father his honour, to mankind their felicity, and to me eternal salvation. I humbly beseech thee, by thy most faithful execution of our cause which thou didst undertake, by the persecutions, griefs, injuries, pains, torments of the cross with most bitter death which thou didst suffer, make me partaker of all thy merits and of all thy mercies, and grant me thy assistance that I may with all devotion and attention offer up this sacrifice unto thee, or

else communicate, in the memory of all the foresaid benefits under the honour of thy most holy Mother and of the Saint—whose remembrance is in that day celebrated—and of all thine elect, for the salvation of my soul and for the profit of thy Church and for redemption of all other holy souls whatsoever. Help me, O Lord JESU, and defend me from committing any offences against thee, from all dangers and confusion, and make me partaker of this thy sacred mystery. Amen. Instruct me perfectly in this knowledge, O Lord JESU.

A PRAYER

of the Blessed Bishop S Ambrose to the glorious Virgin Mary.

O MOTHER and only Virgin MARY, of singular merit, without any match, whom our Lord kept unspotted both in mind and body that thou mightest be a worthy vessel out of whom the Son of God might make a fit habitation for himself and draw the price of our Redemption; I beseech thee, O most merciful Virgin, through whom all the world was saved, be an intercessor for me, a most miserable sinner and polluted with all iniquity, that even now our Lord may grant unto my unhappy soul, love of purity and the perfection of chastity. For I, oh, I, a most

unhappy creature, have lost the grace of all mine innocency, of all my holiness. I have sundry ways violated the holy temple of God. But what do I mean to rehearse my filthiness and uncleanness to thy pure ears? I quake for fear, O sweet Lady, and, mine own conscience accusing me, I stand as one deformed, and being naked in thy presence, am ashamed of myself. But to whom else, lying now at the point of death, should I show my wounds? Or from what other mean may I hope for the benefit of my safety if that only sanctuary of eternal pity should be shut from me? Therefore, hear, O sweet Lady, hear, O merciful Virgin, hear and hearken attentively, I humbly beseech thee, to the suit of a poor citizen, utterly undone, excluded now from all portion in thine inheritance and returning in hope to receive some words of comfort from thy hands after the enduring of long banishment, after the suffering of grievous scorns, and after the sustaining of heavy punishment. I remember, O good Lady, and it delighteth me much to remember it, in what sort thou didst reveal thy memorable name to a servant of thine, being ready to yield up the ghost, thereby to recommend thy singular and gracious protection to all persons in misery. For thou didst appear unto him when he was in these hard straits and askedst him

whether he knew thee or no, when he answered, O pure Lady, even trembling and quaking, that he did not. How graciously and familiarly didst thou then, O glorious Virgin, of thy benignity and goodness say unto him: I am the Mother of mercy. Before whom, therefore, may we which are in misery or before whom may we which are in desolation more rightly lament and bewail all the evils of our whole calamity and misery than before thee, the true and undoubted Mother of mercy? O holy Mother, O unspotted Mother, O most pure Mother, O Mother of mercy, pity and compassion; open the bosom of thy compassion and receive into it a wretched creature even dead in sin. Behold, O sweet Lady, the prodigal son with naked and worn feet, by reason of his continual travel, doth sigh, cry and call unto thee, O blessed Mother, out of the place of horror and fear, out of the dark clouds of uncleanness and filthiness, being not unmindful how often thou hast relieved him, protected him and excused him with God the Father, he being a most merciful and gracious Father, but thou a sweet and loving Mother. Acknowledge, O blessed Mother, thy sons, whom thy dearly beloved and only begotten Son was not ashamed to call his brothers. Although that a sword did pierce thy soul for that innocent and

crucified Son of thine, yet how canst thou contain from taking compassion upon thy poor servants dead in sin, who shroud themselves only under thy protection; how canst thou refrain at any time, O gracious Lady, from showing thy motherly affection and sorrow for us with shedding of tears? We are violently plucked from thee, we are spoiled by force of all our consolation, we are brought under subjection, there is none to deliver us, there is none to redeem us, there is none to rise up early and to be bound for us. Arise up thou, therefore, O merciful Lady, arise up, O gracious Virgin, out of that holy place of thine where thou standest to hear our prayers, and hold up thine immaculate hands before that golden altar of man's reconciliation, and we shall obtain that suit by thy mean which we prefer by thine intercession; surely we shall be pardoned of that which we do most fear, neither can he long withhold from showing us mercy at thy desire, whom thou didst so often nourish, O sweet Mother, when he was a sucking infant, and didst comfort when he fell a-crying. Who, therefore, is more mighty in merits to pacify the wrath of so high a judge than thou which wert thought worthy to be the Mother of the same judge and Saviour? Doubt not, O Lady, to sue for us, for he is made of our bones and he

is flesh of our flesh; he is our head and he knoweth our workmanship and of what we are framed. O ornament of Virgins, O Lady of Nations, O Queen of Angels, O Fountain of all creatures, O the pure cleanser of sinners, O holy and perpetual Virgin Mary, help me, a poor miserable creature, relieve me which am utterly undone. And though I be one that dare not now—the more is my grief—hope for thine incomparable robe of virgins which is angelical, yet let me, I beseech thee, O blessed Virgin, receive by thy glorious merits some wedding garment how simple and base soever it be. To conclude: Although I shall not deserve to approach more nearly and to be present amongst the beautiful and odoriferous companies of your glory, yet, let me, standing aloof and being placed afar off, attain to see and hear the order of your going, your music and your harmony, and whatsoever else pertaineth to your glory and triumph, when you shall, singing and dancing, follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth. O singular Virgin, O most high and perpetual Virgin, O only Mother and blessed Virgin Mary, let me desire one thing at thy hands in the end of this my unworthy supplication, made without the reverence and devotion which I ought. Let me desire and humbly beseech this one thing at thy hands in the name of

thy dearly beloved Son, that it would please thee to grant me a continual and perpetual memory of thy most sweet name; let it be a most delightful meat unto me to nourish me; let it be a most sweet food to refresh my soul; let it be a comfort unto me in all tribulations; let it be in the beginning of all my mirth and pleasure. For if I may obtain this by the gift of God and thy goodness, I can never fear then utterly to perish by any accident whatsoever, because thy grace shall be ever present with me, thy mercy and protection shall never be from me, and if I should chance to sink even into hell, yet there thou wouldst seek me; and thou wilt draw me from thence and deliver me to thy Son, which did redeem me and wash away my sins with his blood, even Jesus Christ our Lord, which liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God world without end. Amen.

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